



£15m HOSPITAL WORK ON TARGET

Report by Sue Austin

A £15 million extension to Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital is on schedule to be completed in May just over a year after work began.

Hundreds of construction jobs, most going to local firms, have been created during the massive project, which has been described by hospital bosses as excellent value for money.

The extension includes four new "clean air" and larger than normal theatres, a High Dependency Unit and an admission on day of surgery unit.

A new dedicated Bone Cancer Centre with inpatient and clinic facilities and a flexible multi-use ward is also being incorporated into the building next to the hospital's main entrance.

Project director for the hospital, Trevor Chadd, said while construction should end in May it will be September, following a commissioning period, when patients will be in the complex.

Mr Chadd said: "What we have been able to achieve for £15.1 million is fantastic value for money for the hospital and its patients."

Engineering

Almost a third of the funding has gone on the top floor, which accommodates all the engineering for the clean air system in the theatres. Mr Chadd explained: "Air will be exchanged up to 500 times a minute which will help the hospital retain its outstanding infection control figures."

The technology also means that the unit now also includes two special wards where any patient who does have an infection can be "barrier" nursed.

He said a key to the design of the new building was the garden in the centre which meant the wards and theatres all had windows and natural light.

"Natural light is important, not only for our patients, but for our staff," he said.

The gardens will be landscaped by an expert horticulturalist and with the help of the hospital's Leagues of Friends.

With 50 per cent of patients now having operations as day case surgery the hospital is ensuring that their experience during that surgery is the best it can be with the new facilities. The day case unit includes consultation rooms, 16 individual bays in which patient will wait for surgery, easy access to theatres and a four-bed ward where patients can stay for up to 15 hours. Construction company Keir, says the build is, weather permitting, on target to finish the work in May. Rob Burgess, Keir project manager, said: "This is a regional flagship scheme for Keir and we are very pleased to be involved. At any one time we have 60-70 workers on site, with more than 60 per cent of these expected to be from a 30-mile radius of the hospital."



Trevor Chadd and Rob Burgess take a look at the new extension to Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital

Latest fall in jobless total is welcomed

THE latest fall in unemployment has been welcomed, with Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies describing the scale of the reduction in recent years as "truly astonishing".

Latest figures show that in November in Montgomeryshire, the number of claimant's for Job Seekers Allowance was 393, representing just 1.3 per cent of the economically active population.

The number of claimants is 25 lower than the previous month, 114 lower than in November 2014 and 379 lower than in November 2010.

Mr Davies said: "I am pleased that the figures continue to show truly astonishingly high levels of employment within Montgomeryshire, and that we remain the constituency with the lowest rate of unemployment in Wales."

"Even more encouraging is the news that

pay is continuing to increase, with weekly wage earnings rising an average of 2.4 per cent above inflation between August and October.

"With unemployment at its lowest for 10 years within the UK, it is clear that the Government's financial strategy is good for the UK, good for Wales and good for Montgomeryshire."

"The figures provide a cheery economic backdrop to Christmas in Montgomeryshire."

The number of people out of work in the Oswestry area has dropped by almost 40 per cent over the last year with figures for young people even better.

The opening of new shops and opportunities in the care industry have helped see more than 200 people find work in the area and apprenticeships are helping get the under 25s onto the employment ladder.

In Oswestry there are now 357 people out of work compared to 568 in November 2014, a decrease of 37 per cent.

The figures for 18-24 year olds show a decrease of 43 per cent with 97 out of work compared to 170 a year ago.

Chris Nyland from Job Centre Plus said the opening of new stores had brought new jobs to Oswestry. He said: "We have had B&M Bargains, Aldi and the Original Factory store open recently. The care industry has also been recruiting in the Oswestry area."

The number of people on the dole in Shropshire as a whole has also fallen once again.

The number of people claiming Jobseekers' Allowance declined to 1,318 in Shropshire in November, from 1,427 the previous month.

● Pipeline - See Page 4

DEVELOPMENT

Hillfort housing battle will carry on say campaigners

CAMPAIGNERS trying to stop housing going up close to Oswestry's historic hillfort say they will continue to fight the plans despite the area being officially earmarked for development.

Protesters say they are looking at how they can legally overturn Shropshire Council's decision to include a piece of land near the hillfort in the county's SAMDev planning blueprint.

Shropshire Council approved its 10-year SAMDev development plan, which includes plans for more than 100 houses on a site off Whittington Road in Oswestry, on Thursday.

The Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort (HOOOH) group, which has supporters including eminent historians from across Britain, says it was extremely disappointed.

Spokeswoman Kate Clarke said: "We are investigating the legal channels we could use to challenge this decision. We also of course have the planning application stage where we shall be putting up a strong fight against the development."

Another HOOOH supporter John Wayne said: "We, at HOOOH, are certainly not down-hearted and will continue to fight the proposal at every stage with everything we've got."

"We have got huge support locally, professionally, academically, and legally - so this is but the beginning of a new battle."

● Plans - See Page 3

TRANSPORT

Damaged bridge is set to reopen

A BRIDGE which was closed after it suffered structural damage during flooding is set to reopen with a weight and width restrictions.

Llandrinio Bridge on the B4393 was closed earlier this month for safety after bad weather and flooding caused damage to the stonework.

Powys County Council Cabinet member for highways John Brunt said it was hoped the bridge would reopen this week. He said: "Engineers have carried out inspections and are happy for the bridge to open with a 7.5t weight limit and a 2.5m width restriction."

INSIDE

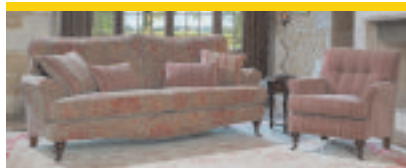
Shopkeeper's dance is a hit



PAGE 5

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Postie Nita is praised for coming to aid of villager

Report by James Pugh

A POSTWOMAN'S actions have been praised by bosses after she came to the aid of a pensioner while out delivering the mail in a village.

Nita Oliver, who has worked at Oswestry delivery office for 17 years, came to the rescue of a gentleman in his 90s while out delivering the mail in the village of Cockshutt, near Ellesmere.

The 54-year-old postie knew the gentleman was frail and noticed his curtains were still drawn at around mid-morning while she was on a recent round.

She immediately rang for an ambulance after finding him unconscious in his home.

She said: "I arrived at the gentleman's house and noticed that his curtains were still drawn.

"I rang his daughter who asked me to go inside to see if he was alright.

"I found him unconscious, so I immediately rang for an ambulance.

"He is still in hospital and is a little bit better."

Following last month's actions, villagers in Cockshutt gave Ms Oliver a spontaneous round of applause recently when she delivered a parcel to the village hall.

"There are a lot of really nice people and the response I have had has been wonderful," she added.

Nita's caring attitude has not gone unnoticed by customers and by postal bosses.

A local villager contacted Royal Mail customer services to praise her actions.

They said: "It's a fantastic example of a community service going above and beyond what would normally be expected.

"Nita did the right and brave thing and got involved, saving the life of one of our villagers."

Mark Robinson, Oswestry delivery office manager, said: "Our postmen and women are the eyes and ears of the community and often go the extra mile to help when it is needed."

Mr Robinson added: "We are lucky as a business to have such conscientious people as Nita working for us, who know their customers well and recognise when there is something wrong.

"Nita went out of her way to look after the gentleman and she has continued to visit him every week in hospital since his fall."

Busy festive time for area's supermarkets



Dawn Rogers, Joseph Smart, Joan Price, Gareth Williams and Paula Bartha are in a festive mood at Stans Superstore

METICULOUS forward planning is paying off for supermarkets in the Oswestry and Welshpool area over the festive period.

Among the supermarkets working hard to ensure shelves remain full and orders are met is Stans Superstore in St Martins.

Justin Smart, general manager at the store, said plans for the festive season began as early as March, with non-food products such as Christmas trees and decorations being purchased from shows that are held at the start of the year.

He said: "We tend to look at last year's figures which gives us an indication of what

people will want but of course it's a case of hoping for the best and what's successful and sells out one year may not the next."

Mr Smart said from September through to December, food takes up the bulk of the orders as people want their food fresh.

He said: "We've noticed people don't tend to do the 'big shop' before Christmas like they once did. Instead people do their shopping in bits and pieces, one week they'll buy the biscuits, the next week they'll buy the chocolates, then as Christmas nears they order their turkey and joints, and the fruit and veg to ensure freshness." The influx in

orders of fresh turkey crowns at Stans this year comes following an in-store butchery returning to the store after 20 years, sparking a "massive increase" in sales of turkey and large joints.

To meet the demands of festive shoppers rather than a festive recruitment drive, Stans are instead relying on the flexibility of their part time staff members by increasing hours by around 20 per cent. Mr Smart said: "Instead of increasing the number of workers we employ, we have increased the hours our part-time members of staff work."

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By-election will be held to fill seat

A BY-ELECTION for the Shropshire Council seat held by former authority leader Keith Barrow will be held in February.

The seat on the council for Oswestry South is up for grabs following the resignation of Mr Barrow. A by-election will be held on February 4.

Mr Barrow stepped down earlier this month saying his motivation had wavered and that fresh eyes and energy were needed for the challenges ahead. A notice of election to find his successor has been published and nomination packs are available from the returning officer at the Shirehall in Shrewsbury. The nomination period for the election closes at 4pm on January 8.

Prosecco is town's favourite fizz

PROSECCO has overtaken Champagne as Oswestry's favourite festive fizz, according to a town centre wine shop.

Mandy and Neil Jenkins, owners of Twelve Green Bottles Wine shop in Leg Street, said there has been a clear move away from Champagne towards Prosecco this year.

They said, Bianca Vigna Extra Dry Prosecco had easily claimed the number one most purchased wine spot for December to date.

Regular Christmas favourite sherry claimed second spot in the shop's top five list.

Mrs Jenkins said: "We've been monitoring sales performance and tracking year-on-year sales against pre-Christmas week last year when Champagne was the clear winner."

"Even with a week of sales to go before Christmas Day there's no catching the Prosecco."

Home needs to improve, say inspectors

A CARE home has been told it must improve in the latest round of inspections.

The report for Llysfield Nursing Home, in Oswestry, was one of 83 made public after a recent latest batch of visits by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

It has been given a "requires improvement" rating. But inspectors agreed that residents were treated

"with kindness and respect". The home, in Middleton Road, provides accommodation with nursing care for up to 30 people. There were 25 people living at the home on the day of the inspection. An inspection team visited the home unannounced on September 30. Inspectors said people's privacy and dignity was not consistently protected.

They said during their visit one person

was examined by the doctor in the lounge where other people were present. But the report praised the staff for supporting people to take part in activities or outings of their choosing. Inspectors also said medicines were managed safely.

Johannes Nang-Bayi, registered manager, said: "We wrote to the CQC about some of their comments. We were not happy with some of the word-

ing. They only spoke to three out of the 25 residents and the three people they spoke to had memory issues so we feel the information was not a true reflection. We were disappointed with the report. There were a lot of good things said but this was not reflected in the ratings.

"We have already implemented changes. We need to have more contact with patients and residents."

Protest fails to halt hillfort homes plans

By Naomi Penrose

MORE than 100 homes could be built close to Oswestry's Iron Age hillfort after Shropshire Council chiefs approved their 10-year housing plan for the region.

Shropshire Council approved its SAMDev housing policy at a meeting on Thursday, leaving the way open for 117 homes to be built near the hillfort.

Despite being greeted by a team of campaigners from the Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort group, councillors approved the development plans which include new homes on land off Whittington Road in Oswestry.

Dr Rachel Pope, senior lecturer in European Prehistory at University of Liverpool, told the meeting planning laws would be "contravened" if SAMDev was approved with the hillfort homes included. She said: "Everyone understands you can't bulldoze a monument but what people don't realise is the landscape has the same protection as the monument itself."

"It's been there for 3,000 years, it's a very loved and respected monument by the people of Oswestry and it's disturbing that the elected representatives are not listening to the people for the sake of 117 homes."

Last year sites at Jasmine Gardens and Oldport Farm, which are also close to the hillfort, were withdrawn from the SAMDev plans, with the Whittington Road site remaining.

Councillor Malcolm Price said: "No-one in this council wants to do anything that is detrimental to the hillfort, that's why we removed two of the sites from the plan."

Councillor Price told the meeting there were no legal grounds why the development plan should not be adopted and councillors approved the document.



Campaigners against the plan for homes close to Oswestry Hillfort stand outside the Shirehall in Shrewsbury

NEWS IN BRIEF

Retail proposal is given backing

COUNCILLORS have supported plans to build shops next to a supermarket in Welshpool.

Welshpool Town Council agreed to support the planning application for two shops, which would be used for pet grooming and veterinary services, next to the Tesco store in Smithfield Road, on the edge of town.

Town clerk Robert Robinson said: "This was what we wanted in the first place."

"We wanted shopping there. At one point there had been talk of having flats there, but that would have cut Tesco off from the rest of the town centre shops. We really wanted to link the two."

"The application for shopping was approved five years ago but they wanted to change it from four units to two now."

"The town council completely supports the application."

Councillors also supported an application to extend a store at the town's cricket and rugby club.

Man is injured in town centre attack

A MAN was left with a wound to his stomach after a serious assault in Oswestry.

Police are calling for witnesses after the attack which happened in the Horse Market area shortly after 3am on Saturday.

Inspector James Ashton said: "The victim sustained a serious wound to his stomach and is being treated in hospital. Police are grateful to a number of people who have already come forward and given accounts but would like to speak to anybody else who has witnessed the incident or has information about it." Ambulance spokesman Murray MacGregor said: "We were called to Bailey Street in Oswestry at 3.14am to reports of an assault."

"A man had been assaulted and had injuries to his chest and back - there was some blood loss but crew were able to stop that. He was then taken to Royal Shrewsbury Hospital."

From your Chronicle

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Jobs in pipeline after new diner proposal is unveiled

Report by Pam Kingsley

MORE than 20 jobs could be created as an American-style diner has unveiled its plans to open a new restaurant.

OK Diner is planning to open on the Oswestry Gateway development, at the edge of the town, creating full and part time jobs once it is open as well as further jobs during the building stage.

It is the latest in a series of big names to come to the site, following Starbucks, KFC, Table Table, and Premiere Inn. Work will be carried out by J Ross Developments, part of The Pickstock Group, which has carried out all the work on the Gateway site. Oliver Hill, spokesman for J Ross Developers, said: "OK Diner are currently investing in a programme of development at roadside locations and see this site in Oswestry, close to the A5/A483 roundabout, as an opportunity to extend the facilities offered to passing traffic."

Traders look to improve retail night

ORGANISERS of Oswestry's first late night Christmas shopping event say they will look at ways of making the occasion even bigger and better next year.

The Christmas Retail Experience on December 11 was organised by Oswestry Chamber of Commerce bosses in partnership with business students from North Shropshire College.

Chamber vice chairman Neil Jenkins said although there was not as many shoppers as the organisers would have liked, the inaugural event was something of an experiment.

He said: "We showed that you could put something on without spending too much money."

"We were also able to keep a couple of the bigger retailers open and one or two of the smaller ones. Because it was the first one we've done, there wasn't really a budget to advertise it. It wasn't put out as much as say Oswestry Christmas Live."

"Because of that we didn't get the numbers you get there but I think if we could find a way of spending £1,000 on advertising the event we could do a hundred times better."

"We've got a bit of time to reflect now but in the new year we're going to sit down and look at it and I would like to talk to the council about doing more next year."

Mr Jenkins said the students' help was invaluable to the success of the evening.

He added "The students did fantastically well and put in a lot of work."

"The architectural style could be described as a retro 1950s American diner theme, with stainless steel walls broken up with areas of blue panels beneath each window and a blue and red vinyl canopy above the windows."

The diner, which along with a planned Countrywide store will be the third phase of the development of the site, would be open from 8am to 10pm daily.

Plans for the Countrywide store were submitted to Shropshire Council earlier this year. The new shop is expected to create 17 jobs – 12 full-time and five part-time.

Mr Hill added that the development of the Countryside and OK Diner sites will provide funding to allow the rest of the site to be developed. The first phase of the £3.36million development began in 2008, when the public house and hotel were built.

The second phase saw the other end of the site developed with the fast food restaurant and coffee shop opened last year.

Once completed, the developers plan to include all types of businesses, with trade counters, car sales, child care facilities, offices, restaurants and light industrial companies all taking up plots.

Oswestry mayor, Councillor Peter Cherrington said the developments were good for the town. He said: "I'm very pleased to hear that the Gateway development is progressing. This form of restaurant gives a greater diversity and option for visitors to the town. I would still like to see more done to improve the entrance into Oswestry prior to reaching the Gateway in order to direct some more of the millions of cars which pass by every year into the town. The Gateway is well positioned to encourage more visitors to the town because drivers have to come off the main road to reach the restaurants."

Spring has sprung, in winter



Jim Sword from Four Crosses with his daffodils. Photo: Peter Shah.

IT'S the warmest December for years and across Shropshire and Mid Wales the seasons have merged into one.

Autumn leaves are still on the trees, holly berries and mistletoe are everywhere and now daffodils have started to emerge from the warm soil. As temperatures hovered around 12c across the region last week and climbed weather forecasters said records were being broken across the country.

This month is expected to become the hottest December since records began.

The balmy weather is tricking our plants, with daffodils the first to start to flower.

Jim Sword said he was astonished to find a patch of daffs in full bloom in his garden in Four Crosses, between Welshpool and

Oswestry. The 85-year-old, who grew up in Keswick in Cumbria and is more used to sub zero temperatures in December, said he could not believe it.

"I have never known daffodils to be out in December," he said.

"I have also got primroses flowering. It is just like spring in the garden."

The mild weather has also seen animals who usually hibernate, such as hedgehogs, still active – which is good news as it means they are able to eat more and be better to equipped to deal with winter – if it arrives.

The very unsettled and often wet weather pattern is set to continue after Christmas to New Year.

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Father disappointed over missed inquiry deadline

Report by Sue Austin

THE father of a teenage soldier who died at the notorious Deepcut Barracks says he is "deeply disappointed" after crucial documents for a new inquest were not submitted by the Ministry of Defence.

Cheryl James, 18, from the Shropshire border, was found with a bullet wound to her head in November 1995 when she was undergoing initial training at the Surrey barracks.

A pre-inquest hearing last week heard that the Ministry of Defence had failed to submit papers before a promised deadline. At the hearing, Nicholas Moss, representing the Ministry of Defence, promised to deliver the documents to the coroner by January 11.

Warning is given after burglaries

RESIDENTS are being warned to remain vigilant after four break-ins were reported in Oswestry in recent weeks.

The first happened on November 27 in York Fields, Oswestry, between noon and 5pm. It is believed that a man and woman attended the address and spoke to the elderly occupier, falsely purporting to be from a local housing association.

They gained entry to the property, police said. While one of the people spoke with the victim, the other went into another room and damaged some tiles. Nothing was stolen. An address at Cornwall Avenue, Gobowen, was broken into between midnight on December 3 and 5pm on December 4. Someone entered the property via an insecure door and took electrical items which were then been discarded on the front lawn.

On December 4 an unoccupied flat in Bailey Street, Oswestry, was broken in to between 5.43pm and 6.43pm. The flat was secured with a padlock on the front door, which was forced to gain access. The flat was empty and nothing was stolen.

And on December 8, someone went into the back garden of a home in Laburnum Drive, Oswestry, between 12.45pm and 2.55pm and used a house brick to smash a rear window leading to the lounge area.

They entered through the hole created and, once inside, all the rooms were searched and jewellery, £100 cash and three passports were stolen.



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Turkey dance is online hit



Christine Holmes from Welshpool in her turkey outfit. Photo: Peter Shah.

IT involves a singing farmer and a dancing turkey – and it has gone viral on the internet.

A video clip filmed at the Welshpool Winter Festival has become the latest internet hit.

It shows singer John Hughes – known as Farmer John – entertaining onlookers as local shopkeeper Christine Holmes, of Flaunt It Card and Gift Shop, dances around dressed as an inflated turkey.

In a few days the video had already attracted more than 6,000 views.

Christine, 50, said the dancing in Puzzle Square was a "spontaneous bit of fun" which she never expected to be an online hit.

"We're a nice little shopping area off the main street which we get fairly busy. We thought we'd show them we could have a bit of fun," she said. "Listening to the music, I danced without even realising. It wasn't staged. I didn't know it was being filmed until my friend called me and I looked around."

"It was just spontaneous thing to put on. I drew the short straw of the turkey outfit but it was quite warm actually and it was quite weatherproof. It's great fun. Everyone should have one. It's easy to dance in, I just had natural rhythm."

"It just seemed to be so funny. It was a good giggle so we put the video on Facebook."

"We can't believe how many views it's had."

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53	JAGUAR XK8 Low Mileage, Silver, MUST BE SEEN	POA	58	VAUXHALL CORSA EXCITE Blue, 7000 miles	SOLD
54	JAGUAR X TYPE 2.5 V6, Auto, BRG, 86,000 Miles, stunning car	£2495	59	FORD GRAND C-MAX TITANIUM 2.0 TDCi Auto, Silver, 56k, AUTOMATIC	£3995
			60	SEAT EXEO 2.0 TDI CRi 140i, Black, 5 speed, full history	£4995
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			62	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 2.0 CDTi, Black, High Mileage	£3995
			63	FIAT BRAVO 1.4 Dynamic, 5 door, Silver, Alloys	£3995
			64	PEUGEOT 207 SHD 1.6 16V, Red, low mileage, full history	£3995
			65	FORD FIESTA ZETEC Cinema, 3 door, bronze metallic	£3995
			66	FORD FIESTA 1.4 Ghia, 5 door, blue	£2995
			67	FORD KA, blue, 60,000 miles	£1895
			68	FORD KA, blue, 60,000 miles	£1895
			69	MINI COOPER 1.6 White, 1 Lady Owner	SOLD
			70	MERCEDES A180 CDI CLASSIC SE Diesel, Silver	£3995
			71	VAUXHALL VECTRA Exclusive 1.8 Red Metallic	£2995
			72	CITROEN XSARA PICASSO HDi Diesel, Silver, FSH	£2195
			73	PEUGEOT 307 XS 2.0 HDi Diesel, Bronze Met, Leather	£2595
			74	JAGUAR X TYPE 2.5 V6 Auto, BRG, 86,000 miles, stunning car	£2495
			75	FORD FIESTA FLAME 5-door, Silver	£2495
			76	BMW 320 2.2 CI COUPE, Unrushed Alloys, Extensive Service History, Low Mileage for year	£1995
			77	Outstanding Condition, Must be Seen	£2495 - £3100
				SUMMER SUN / SUMMER FUN	
				VW GOLF 1.9TD Black very high mileage	TO CLEAR £2800
				FORD STREET KA Blue Convertible	£1795
				MG TF Convertible, in Yellow	£1695
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BREEZE ABOUT TOWN

It might be getting close to Christmas but I'm not feeling much of the festive cheer yet, particularly after hearing that public sector pension pots are now three times the size of private ones – that's if you have one at all. Official figures have laid bare the full scale of the great pension divide. Public sector workers had the equivalent of £61,600 in their pension pots between July 2012 and June 2014, according to the Office for National Statistics. This compared to just £24,000 for private sector workers.

As one quickly approaching the age when pensions become not just important, but absolutely vital, these shocking figures emphasise why we should no longer be subsidising final salary retirement benefits for the public sector and that includes both Shropshire Council and Powys County Council. It was interesting to read that Britain's 5.4million public sector workers are twice as likely to have a pension as their counterparts in the private sector, with 84 per cent of them enjoying a final salary scheme. In contrast, just 42 per cent of the 25.3million people working in the private sector had a work pension over the same two-year period. And how many of us will benefit from final salary schemes? Not many.

The news only confirms what we already knew, but did we really know how big the divide was? As someone whose own pension pot was wrecked by redundancy I find these figures hard to swallow. Our NHS is in crisis yet we are told that dozens of top officials are sitting on £1million pound pension pots and it's a similar situation in council offices across the land. So isn't it time we stopped subsidising the public sector elite with our hard earned money? Money that we should really be saving for our own retirement?

The Tax Payers Alliance has begun a campaign to bring an end to the public sector pension scandal and I'm right behind them. Local authorities are facing financial meltdown as the Government slashes their budgets but I haven't heard one official suggest looking at the pension pot payments which are taking cash out of our pockets.

... It's hats off again to Oswestry's world marathon record breaker Amy Hughes as she looks to complete a 12-day charity Christmas challenge.

She's been out raising awareness of sports and cashing in for charity in the 12 days running up to Christmas Day. From high board diving with Great Britain's Freddie Woodward, judo with Telford Olympian Kelly Edwards, running the Old Trafford Santa Run and wheelchair racing with Hannah Cockcroft there seems nothing that can faze our Amy.



A sculpture of a pig by Yorkshire-based artist Kim Neith-Thompson, made from Welsh wood



The demand for Welsh timber and its products has been driven by growth in the house building market



A welcome sign created by Kim Neith-Thompson, using sequoia from the Dyfi Valley

WORKING FOR YOU



2015 has been another busy year in North Shropshire. I was delighted to be re-elected with an increased majority at the General Election in May and have been working hard ever since to deliver on the pledges I made to my constituents.

I have made progress on roads. In a debate in Parliament I had an assurance from the Minister that he will visit Shropshire to discuss the proposed dualling of the A5; my office is busy organising this. Virgin have agreed to look at extending the London rail service to Gobowen and Wrexham and I am fixing a meeting in Oswestry with Network Rail, Arriva and local MPs in January.

I continue to work closely with BT and other communications companies to tackle our inadequate mobile and broadband provision locally and look forward to an update from Connecting Shropshire next month.

The wise decision to throw out plans for four wind farms in Montgomeryshire has come as a huge relief for those who would have been affected by this proposal and I am pleased the Government is ending the subsidies to these inefficient, bird-chopping eyesores. The focus for many in 2016 will be the referendum on our membership of the EU. I was clear at the election that I would be campaigning to leave. The EU was always a political project, intending to create a United States of Europe, a far cry from the Single Market that we signed up to. I am delighted therefore that the election of a Conservative majority Government means that we are going to have the chance to decide what our future relationship with our European neighbours should be. I have been working to help set up Vote Leave over recent months and with the referendum on the horizon, we will be redoubling our efforts to present an optimistic case for a prosperous future outside of the EU. I would encourage anyone who feels similarly to sign up to the campaign. The economy continues to recover and figures published this week show that the total number of unemployed claimants in the North Shropshire constituency in November 2015 was 688. This represents a rate of 1.3 per cent of the economically active population aged 16 to 64. The total number of claimants is 280 fewer than a year ago. Finally, I cannot end without mentioning our farmers and food producers, many of whom have had another difficult year. We have a huge number of successful food businesses and I hope that, like me, you will make an extra effort to buy local products at every opportunity.

I wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Owen Paterson North Shropshire MP

Demand for Welsh wood in host of new markets

Businesses are continually finding innovative and new uses for Welsh timber, writes KAREN EVANS

WELSH timber has been highly sought after by the construction, manufacturing and fencing sectors for decades, but that's not the whole story.

While most of the timber which left Natural Resources Wales' managed forests last year was destined for these traditional markets, Welsh businesses are continually finding new and innovative uses for Welsh timber.

Jerry Pritchard, head of NRW's Timber marketing team, said: "The team have had a very successful year, completing the full programme of felling and thinning and with an income on sales 15 per cent higher than expected at the beginning of the year.

"We have seen a high demand for our timber and its products, driven by growth in the house building market, good manufacturing demand, an exceptionally busy period in the fencing sector and continued growth in the use of wood biomass.

"In addition we have also seen an upturn in our niche markets supplying a number of small businesses with timber for a whole range of uses."

G & T Evans of Newtown, a company who has been a customer of NRW and its predecessor Forestry Commission Wales for 30 years, uses its timber for everything from packaging to taxidermy.

A spokesperson said: "One of the products we manufacture with NRW supplied timber is woodwool. Larch woodwool is used during the filtration process for Sarson's vinegar and, along with Douglas fir



Pontcysyllte aqueduct, carved from Welsh sequoia by Kim Neith-Thompson

and spruce woodwool, it can be used to pack everything from engineering parts to ceramics, fill teddy bears and, by taxidermists, to stuff animals.

"And if you receive a Christmas hamper this year, you might find the woodwool used to protect its contents came from our mill."

On a more artistic note, Yorkshire-based artist Kim Neith-Thompson has used sequoia from the Dyfi Valley to create a series of stunning sculptures as part of a walking trail at Ty Mawr Country Park, Wrexham.

Among Kim's subjects are birds, fish and animals and an incredible bench representing the Pontcysyllte aqueduct.

And that's not all, as Jerry explained: "We have supplied red cedar to a small

enterprise which makes bee hives and another which builds glamping pods and supplies high quality cladding for bespoke houses – both orders which demand high specifications.

"Whatever the request we'll try and meet it but we had to admit defeat earlier this year when we were asked to provide poles to a company promoting medieval jousting events around the country. Our niche sales account for around £300,000 a year and we have members of our timber sales team who concentrate on looking for new opportunities to supply specialist users.

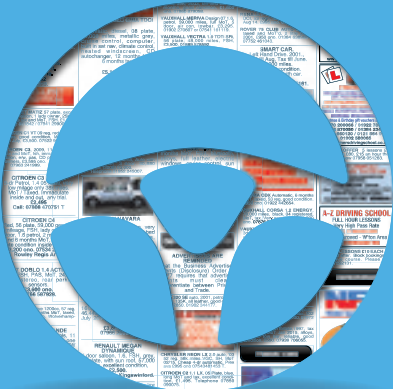
"We are looking at supplying good quality broadleaf timber, such as cherry and yew, to specialist users."

And while niche sales are proving to be an important addition to NRW's

timber revenue, the real economic value of the public forest estate to the Welsh economy is shown in the numbers that the market generates.

Jerry said: "More than 660,000 tonnes of timber left the public forest estate last year – that's an incredible 26,400 lorry loads coming from nearly 250 different sites and using more than 1000km of forest road.

"These logs supply over 50 businesses with everything from single loads of logs to the aforementioned niche markets, right through to 10,000 tonnes of timber which feed the major processors in Wales. And the improved demand and competition for our timber meant that the NRW Timber Sales team were able to realise a total income of over £16 million which is £2.5million above budget."



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NHS shake-up perfect for a TV sitcom

SOMEDAY someone will write a book about Shropshire's health services.

It could be entitled "From Confusion into Chaos", then there could be a TV series in the style of Yes Minister.

London mandarins have sent "experts" to sort out our A&E services.

I thought all the numerous organisations influencing Shropshire's health services, already employed experts.

Hopefully better than Shropshire CCG experts who planned to achieve a £3.6 million surplus, then midway in the year forecast, without apparent embarrassment, a £10.6 million deficit.

That's a £14.2 million mistake. How long would experts like this last elsewhere?

The costs of the services of the Whitehall experts, which Shropshire will have to pay, are apparently unknown, and may even be unlimited, nor does it seem there any time scale by which they must complete the exercise.

It is known that there will be no money to implement their expert recommendations. Am I alone in finding all this beyond belief?

Unless the Whitehall experts have the power to impose recommendations the whole thing will be used as an excuse for a frenzy of delaying tactics, by the legion

of prevaricators and decision dodgers who appear to control the organisations.

This letter is not in any way a criticism of the many thousands of people who keep the health service in Shropshire running, without them it would come to a halt in a day.

It is a criticism of the structure, there are at least 10 significant organisations with a finger in the pie, and it needs pruning.

It is also a criticism of the quality of professional services the various bodies receive; the current experts simply aren't good enough.

BOB GROOM
Trench

Councils have to fight to keep services open to public

THE councils and MPs of Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin need to stop making political capital out of the closure of one or other A&E and unite and fight to keep both A&Es open.

Future Fit is now saying that the deficit at the two hospitals needs to be tackled before it can look at future options – surely this was obvious from the beginning before millions of pounds was wasted on the consultation.

Let's remember that this is a national health service. All people should have access equally, not be penalised because of where they live.

The reality when an A&E is closed, such as in Manchester and Stafford, is that the A&E that remains open becomes overwhelmed.

There are a number of things that Future Fit has not considered – the longer the journey, the higher the risk to life. Patients arrive with more complications and stay in hospital longer. The strain the extra distances will place upon the ambulance service and the extra cost of fuel and maintenance. Future Fit is not about how to improve our local health service provision, it is about saving money and exists in a political world whose ideology is to slowly privatise the NHS.

It is our NHS, we own it, and our communities should be allowed a frank and honest dialogue that isn't a smokescreen for reducing facilities in a county where the population is growing.

CATH EDWARDS
Telford & Wrekin Green Party

Looking to trace relatives

I HAVE some documentation relating to the Robinson family who originated from Penrhos, Llanymynech, Powys, and I am trying to trace relatives so I can pass it on. I set out a summary of the family tree.

Father Edward Robinson born 1827 died in 1920, schoolmaster and Vicar of Penrhos.

Wife Lydia Robinson (maiden name Beckett) died aged 78.

Children: Francis Maria Robinson – married name Davies born 1855. George Edward Robinson born 1861. Married 1905 schoolmaster lived in Rochdale in 1911.

Had two children Richard Edward Beckett Robinson and Dulcie Beatrice Robinson.

William Henry Whiteside Robinson born 1863 lived in West Bromwich in 1911 a corn merchants clerk.

Also lived in Wednesday.

John Farrer Robinson born 1871. Vicar at Penrhos.

His children Mrs Hughes-Davies, Mr A Robinson Mr J F Robinson. Grandchildren: Gladwyn, Winifred and Dorothy Hughes-Davies.

Alfred Robinson born 1865 died 1929 lived in Wolverhampton. Schoolmaster. Contact me on (01691) 831524.

KEN HALL
Four Crosses

Woolies was the place to go for Christmas



Finished your Christmas shopping? If not, you are leaving it a little late, to say the least. But here's one shop that won't be able to help you any more. It's Woolworth's at Oswestry which, like all Woolworth's stores, has faded into history. Here sales assistant Miss Helen Wilkinson adds the final touches to a special Christmas display in 1982.

Terrible refugee crisis was all part of a larger plan

MOST people want to live a peaceful life free from interference and hindrance.

This is a human right we take for granted in the West.

Shame that western governments did not give the people of North African and Middle Eastern countries the same human rights.

Instead they've backed Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, to murder and displace hundreds of thousands of people.

Looking back, it was all part of the plan to cause a refugee crisis, so that some terrorists can sneak through – just the excuse governments in Europe need to beef up security. Now they want to keep track of everything we have searched for on the web and it will not end there. Lawyers and barristers will make a pretty penny defending illegals. Others who will exploit these people will be refugee groups, charities and other left-wing organisations, who will profit by trying to make the rest of us feel bad, and will never acknowledge that they were part of the problem in the first place.

MARK NORWOOD
Whittington

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Readers' Letters,
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Telford, TF1 5HU

EMAIL

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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Gap between rich and poor

WE have a massive decline in our country's heavy industries in certain parts of our kingdom, with dependence on cheap foreign steel, coal, chemicals, etc.

We have six million people under the living wage.

The UK is the fourth richest country in the world, but the gap is widening all the time between the rich and poor. This can't go on. We must address local funding and tax avoidance on a massive scale.

JR BROWN
Shrewsbury

Britain is not a democracy but is ruled by the EU

WE are no longer a democracy – we are a member of the European Union which does not do democracy, it is a duel dictatorship controlled by Germany and France.

The majority of the laws, regulations and rules we live under are decided and decreed in Brussels by 27 foreigners we have never voted for plus one Brit. Those laws are presented to our sham of a Parliament who are not allowed to refuse or even amend them.

The EU's own Parliament is a cynical sop which does not have the power to legislate. The whole behind-closed-doors system is not unlike the old Soviet Politburo – no say – just pay.

Our 'share' of the just pay package is an astounding £50 million plus every single day.

A national scandal when we are trillions in debt, up to our eyes in immigrants and watching the infrastructure of our island failing on all sides – is there a British politician with any backbone left to sort this mess?

BOB WYDELL
Oswestry

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Inquest told of tragedy on road

A TEENAGER who was killed when she was hit by a car suffered major traumatic injuries, an inquest has heard.

Katie Griffith, 18, died on the A5 road near the Maes Mawr junction, near Llangollen, on December 4, the inquest was told.

Her inquest was opened last week by North Wales East and Central coroner John Gittins.

The inquest heard that the teenager was certified dead at the scene of the tragedy after a collision with a Seat Leon car.

Miss Griffith, from Emral Brook Close in Ruabon, was a former pupil of Ysgol Rhiwabon and Ysgol Dinas Bran in Llangollen, the inquest hearing was told.

She was the daughter of Paul Griffith, who identified her to the police, and Elaine Ansloos, who works in Chirk.

The inquest was adjourned to a date to be fixed after Mr Gittins heard that police investigations into the incident could take some time.

Rose included in Who's Who 2016

SHE might be better known as the wife of a Shropshire MP, but now Rose Paterson has made it into the definitive directory of everyone who's anyone.

Mrs Paterson, who is married to North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson, has been named in the 2016 edition of Who's Who. The 59-year-old is chairman of the Aintree Racecourse where the Grand National is staged – and it is her role there that has contributed to the reasons she is among the potted biographies of 33,000 of the most talented, famous and influential people in the world.

City residents target of new tourism brochure

Report by Pam Kingsley

OSWESTRY is hoping to encourage more visitors from two major cities through its new tourist guide.

The 2016 Oswestry and Borderland tourist brochure has been released, with the majority of copies heading to local tourism centres, hotels and attractions.

But Oswestry Borderland Tourism, which publishes the guide, is also planning to send 3,000 copies to Birmingham and Manchester. Richard Powell, chairman of Oswestry Borderland Tourism, said the group was very pleased with the latest brochure. He said: "We have printed 25,000, of which 14,000 will be distributed to tourist information centres and 8,000 will be delivered to local hotels and attractions.

"With the other 3,000 we will be targeting Birmingham and Manchester. We think there's a lot of scope to attract new visitors from those areas.

"We find that when people come to this area they can't believe how much there is to see and do. They come for a day, and then say they'll have to come back for a longer period of time because they didn't get to see everything they wanted."

Mr Powell said the brochure is becoming more popular every year, with supplies running out last year despite a print run of 22,000. He said: "I've seen brochures for areas all over the country, and I have to say I haven't seen a better one than ours.

"We may be in the digital age, but you can't beat having a brochure in your hand to refer to. A lot of people don't want to keep referring to a computer or their phone to get this kind of information – they want something easy to access."

Kind readers support festive toy appeal



Paul White from Storage King, Lynsey Kilvert and Louise Corfield from Hope House Children's Hospice and Sue Austin from the Chronicle with some of the toys

READERS of the Oswestry and Border Chronicle and its sister paper the Shropshire Star have put smiles on the faces of youngsters, families and staff at Hope House Children's Hospice near Oswestry.

Toys of all shapes and sizes, donated by kind hearted people for our Toy Appeal were delivered to the

hospice in time for Christmas. The 170 presents were part of a massive 800 toys and gifts dropped off at the Shropshire Star offices throughout the county for the appeal, which was organised in partnership with Storage King.

Lynsey Kilvert from Hope House Children's Hospice said: "The toys

will give a lot of happiness to our families." Other good causes benefiting from the appeal include the children's unit at Telford's Princess Royal Hospital, The Harry Johnson Trust, the children's services teams at Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Councils, the Salvation Army and Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

Approval for homes after appeal sparks review call

A DECISION to build 25 homes on farmland has been criticised as "another death knell for the countryside".

Suzanne Evans, Ukip's deputy chairman, has urged Shropshire Council to fight back after a planning inspector overturned a decision to build the homes at The Cross in West Felton.

She said she believed the authority should pursue a judicial review and "stand up for the countryside".

The plans were refused by Shropshire Council in October last year. But that decision was overturned at appeal.

Shropshire Council had refused permission for Galliers Homes Ltd to build at the site because, while the authority recognised that the development would contribute economically and socially to the local area, it considered that this was outweighed by the visual harm to the character of the rural village and the loss of agricultural land.

The site was also not included in the Oswestry Local Plan or SAMDev, the council's housing plan for the next decade.

But the inspector ruled that the appeal should be allowed and outline planning permission granted.

The verdict said: "The appeal site is available. A well-established building company, with a track record of delivering new dwellings, has an interest in acquiring the site to undertake a development in the short term."

Ms Evans, who stood for parliament in Shrewsbury & Atcham, said: "This development will be another death knell for the countryside and I urge Shropshire Council to take the matter to judicial review."

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Wednesday 30th	9am-5pm	Sunday 3rd January	10am-4pm

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Review of council's ICT costs £600k

CONSULTANTS will be paid £600,000 for a four-month review of Shropshire Council's computer system.

The authority is looking to overhaul all its information communications technology (ICT) systems – a process expected to cost millions of pounds.

Councillor David Turner, the authority's cabinet member for IT, has confirmed that a lead consultant and a team of 14 agency staff will conduct the review until March.

The council says it expects the team to have designed new ICT architecture by March, and that the new system will save it money.

Councillor Turner said: "Our aim is to have sufficient additional staff resources to redesign the whole of the ICT architecture in a comparatively short time. This should present us with some 'invest to save proposals' which hopefully will prove that by buying or leasing new systems, equipment, and training our staff, we will overall, save money and improve performance." The council's opposition leader Alan Mosley said the review was overdue and a failure to address IT problems had left the council facing "extortionate" costs.

Vehicle fire leads to closure of road

THE A483 around Oswestry had to be closed on Monday after a car fire.

Emergency services were called to deal with the incident which happened at the Gledrid roundabout on the outskirts of Oswestry.

The fire involved a Ford Galaxy vehicle.

West Mercia Police were alerted to the blaze just after 9.45am on Monday.

Cafe Radio hits the right tone for friendly service



THE Chronicle's We Mean Business campaign is celebrating Oswestry business. This week we are celebrating Cafe Radio on Bailey Street.

Cafe Radio has been run by owner Saffron Rainey for five years, with a tagline of "gourmet food, cafe prices".

Mr Rainey said in the five years the business has been open, the cafe has become an important part of the community.

He said: "The cafe is not just a place people come to eat with family and friends or meet work colleagues, it has become a place where people make friends and get to know each other."

"People make friendships here, that is the atmosphere we have created."

"We cook with local produce and use imagination to produce really good food at really decent prices."

"A bowl of soup for example costs just £3.50 while our famous Radio Burger, with triple cooked chips, costs £7.65."

"We support local producers and in the burgers we use Hartshorn mince especially made for us while we buy our coffee from local firm the Bridge Coffee Company."

The cafe's customer service has proved a hit with visitors and the business has won a Trip Advisor certificate of excellence.

Mr Rainey said: "It is great to have the certificate of excellence. It is based on customer reviews and we are grateful for their support."



Saffron Rainey outside Cafe Radio in Bailey Street in Oswestry

NEWS IN BRIEF

Science suite is officially opened

A SCHOOL has celebrated its 608th anniversary as an independent school with the opening of a new science suite.

Oswestry School began its celebrations with a dinner for Old Oswestrians followed by a service for the whole school, Old Oswestrians, family and friends at St Oswald's Parish Church, led by Rev Kim Taplin, the Vicar of All Saints w St John, Clifton.

Following the service the chairman of the governors and Old Oswestrian Peter Wilcox-Jones officially cut the ribbon at the opening of the science suite.

The labs were created from four existing classrooms, along with the staff room. Work began in the summer holidays to strip out the rooms, and specialist teams fitted interactive projectors and fixtures in readiness for the start of term.

In the same building a new junior art room has been created to bring together the art and technology faculty under one roof.

Man admits to funds offence

A 30-year-old man admitted being involved in falsely obtaining more than £16,000 when he appeared at the crown court.

Graham Thomas pleaded guilty to falsely claiming he had authority to transfer £14,000 in funds belonging to Moira and William Benyon between February and July.

In addition he admitted a similar charge relating to the use of a bank card belonging to Moira Benyon to obtain £2,524 in March. Sentence was adjourned at Shrewsbury Crown Court until January 18 for reports and Thomas, of Dolgoch, Porth-y-Waen, near Oswestry, was allowed bail.

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Samsung Galaxy S6 32GB	24 months	£0	£15	£360	£360	0%	0%	£360	£13.50	£13.50 + RPI announced in Feb 2016 – Price A	Price A + RPI announced in Feb 2017

Each year your O2 Refresh Airtime Plan will be adjusted on your April bill by the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation announced in the preceding February. See o2.co.uk/prices for more info. Refresh terms and eligibility criteria apply. Subject to status, 18+. Includes 24 month Airtime Plan on our Pay Monthly Mobile Agreement and options to take a device by paying cash upfront or with a Device Plan on a consumer credit agreement. Subject to status, credit check, payment by Direct Debit. 18+. Credit provided by Telefonica UK Limited trading as O2, 260 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4DX. In relation to consumer credit, Telefonica UK Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. In relation to consumer credit, Border Phones Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Standard UK calls, texts and data. Samsung Galaxy S6 32GB £0 upfront on a £28.50 tariff with 500MB data. Was £33.50 tariff. Tariff includes £13.50 Airtime Plan. £120 saving on the device: total amount payable was £480 now £360. Samsung Galaxy S6 edge + 32GB is available at £0 upfront on a £37.50 tariff with 1GB data. Was £42.50 tariff. Tariff includes £17.50 Airtime Plan. £120 saving on the device: total amount payable was £600 now £480. Samsung Galaxy S6 edge + 32GB is available at £9.99 upfront on a £46 tariff with 3GB data. Was £51 tariff. Tariff includes £21 Airtime Plan. £120 saving on the device: total amount payable was £729.99 now £609.99. Save up to £123.99 off the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 8". Saving based on £39.99 off the upfront payment was £39.99 now £0 and 20% off the 24 month Pay Monthly Mobile Agreement. Offer ends 13 January 2016. See o2.co.uk for full terms.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Reminder given on property rules

LANDLORDS and agents in Powys who rent out properties are being reminded that they must now register on the Rent Smart scheme.

The scheme was formally launched last month and is designed to prevent rogue landlords and agents from letting and managing properties. It will also raise awareness by landlords, agents and tenants of their rights and responsibilities. Powys County Councillor Darren Mayor said: "We welcome the introduction of Rent Smart Wales as it will help us improve standards in the private rented sector in Powys, which plays a crucial role in the local housing market. The changes will help to protect tenants in the private rented sector - including those who are most vulnerable."

Ramblers take on New Year walk

THE Welshpool Ramblers will see in the New Year in customary fashion with a short circular walk of about five miles from Abermule Community Centre leaving at 11am on New Year's Day.

The relatively easy route initially has a 20 minute climb out of Abermule village to the 'summit' of the walk, before gradually descending to the start point. A shorter version will be offered should the weather be particularly poor. Meet in the layby in front of the Abermule Community Centre/School (OS Ref: SO 163 948). Walkers from the Welshpool area may wish to meet outside the Tourist Information Centre, Church Street car park, Welshpool at 10.30am from where shared transport may be available.

Higher phone masts will boost coverage, says AM

Report by Pam Kingsley

A POLITICIAN has demanded action to improve mobile phone coverage - by allowing masts to be higher.

Montgomeryshire Assembly Member Russell George said rules should be changed to allow phone masts to be extended upwards to up to 30 metres.

He has met Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones to call for improvements to mobile phone signals across the region.

And he intends to meet phone company executives in the coming weeks.

He said: "Hundreds of residents have got in touch with me in recent months to complain about the poor mobile coverage in Montgomeryshire so I was pleased to be able to raise this important issue with the First Minister."

"Mobile operators have informed me that one of the most significant barriers to investment in mobile infrastructure in Mid Wales are restrictive planning policies. Where there is demand and local agreement from the community, planning policies should be sufficiently flexible to allow mobile infrastructure to be rolled out."

"I have called on the First Minister to examine whether changes to the planning framework are required to increase permitted development to a height of 25 metres and allow a five metre increase in mast height in non-protected areas, two changes which mobile operators say will result in a significant improvement in mobile coverage."

Veteran will enjoy Christmas treat



Mr Davies with his Legion of Honour medal

A SECOND World War veteran and Legion of Honour recipient is looking forward to spending Christmas with other Armed Forces veterans thanks to a military charity.

Elvet Davies, 98, from Welshpool, is registered blind and will be heading to the Blind Veterans UK centre in Llandudno.

He said he is particularly looking forward to speaking to other veterans and recounting stories.

"Going to the Blind Veterans UK's Llandudno centre is wonderful. It is a brilliant place and I feel at home there," he said.

"This will be the second Christmas I've spent at the centre and I know spending time there will be fun. The last time I spent Christmas at the centre I really enjoyed it, so I'm very happy to be going again this year. I might struggle to get involved in all the activities now that I'm 98 but I will certainly enjoy the food, the celebrations and the chance to spend time with other veterans."

Mr Davies served with the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry regiment and the Gordon Highlanders.

Success of homes group is revealed

A HOUSING association that serves the region has enjoyed a successful year, according to its annual report.

Mid Wales Housing Association has opened new accommodation and renovated several properties in 2015.

A development at Coed Y Llan in Llanidloes was completed in September, providing 25 homes ranging from one bedroom houses and flats to a purpose built four bedroom property for a disabled tenant and family.

In the past three months the association has also spent more than £50,000 on a range of maintenance works, including 15 kitchen replacements across Churchstoke, Llanymynech, Clyro, Montgomery and Llanfyllin, redecoration and new windows and doors, and a new boiler.

Next year plans are to complete a further six homes at the Dolhafren development. The projects are detailed in the association's annual self evaluation report. Maureen Woosnam, performance and information officer, said: "Our priorities for this year are excellent customer service, developing housing, embedding processes and culture, maintaining income and care and repair in Powys."

Young motorists can take course

YOUNG drivers in Mid Wales are being urged to sign up to a course in the new year that will help them get driving experience and skills.

Pass Plus Cymru is a road safety scheme being offered to young drivers by Powys County Council's Road Safety Unit.

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Per Lindstrand makes a point at the Chronicle Business Club



Owen Paterson met Chronicle staff to give his support to our business campaign



Iain St John with Per Lindstrand at the Chronicle Business Club

Backing business

Report by Sue Austin

THE Oswestry and Border Chronicle is now halfway through its pioneering We Mean Business campaign.

The campaign celebrates Oswestry business and champions innovation.

Since the campaign was launched in June at a packed Oswestry Chamber of Commerce meeting, it has won praise from business and political leaders alike.

North Shropshire MP Owen Paterson popped into our offices in Oswestry to give his personal backing to the campaign. Key to the success of the campaign has been our weekly profiles on some of Oswestry's leading businesses.

For large operations to businesses run by just one person, our free of charge profiles have provided a platform for many firms to outline what they do to the public.

Our first profile in our campaign focused on Booka Bookshop in Church Street, shortly after it was named the best independent bookshop in the country.

Another key element of the We Mean Business campaign has been the revitalised Chronicle Business Club.

The Chronicle Business Club is a great place to network and to hear about the latest business news.

We were delighted to welcome Oswestry business entrepreneur Per Lindstrand as the guest speaker to the autumn meeting of the Business Club where he took part in a question and answer session with Chronicle associate editor Iain St John.

A further key element of the campaign has been our many special features looking at business in Oswestry and celebrating the work of its independent traders.

The We Mean Business campaign runs for another six months so look out for more of our weekly profiles as well as our special features on business.



Chamber of Commerce members listen to the Per Lindstrand question and answer session



Booka Bookshop featured in the first of the campaign's weekly profiles



The We Mean Business campaign was launched in June



The Chronicle's Iain St John launches the campaign



Per Lindstrand and Iain St John chat at the Chronicle Business Club

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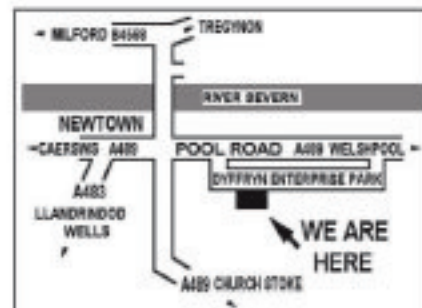
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Waterwheel was one of the Gorge's wonders



Benthall mill and the huge waterwheel.

STANDING only a stone's throw from the historic Iron Bridge, the huge Benthall waterwheel was one of the wonders of the Ironbridge Gorge.

But while the bridge is world famous and draws tourists from around the globe, the waterwheel, allegedly one of the largest in England, faded and suffered an ignominious demise.

It inspired many paintings and drawings and had it survived into the modern era it would surely have been preserved and been a jewel in the crown of Ironbridge Gorge Museum. Today all that remains of it is the ruined shell of a building by a brook which flows down a cleft at Benthall Bank and into the River Sever below.

For its background, we can draw on an article written by Jonathan Briggs about Benthall Mill for the December 1984 issue of the Shropshire Magazine.

"It has proved impossible to date the mill exactly, though the first reference to it is from 1799 when Simon Goodrich, an Admiralty engineer, visited the site while on a tour of Shropshire," writes Mr Briggs.

"It seems likely that the mill, like Ironbridge town, was built as a consequence of the new bridge being erected in 1779."

When first built the waterwheel was wooden and of a somewhat unconventional design reminiscent of later "suspension" waterwheels.

"This early wheel may well have been experimental and was almost certainly unique for its day."

Mr Briggs says the mill was rebuilt in the middle of the 19th century and the wheel replaced with an iron one of similar size but more conventional design. The water from the brook tumbling down Benthall Bank was conveyed to the wheel by an overhead pipe.

"Many who remember the mill will probably also recall claims that the waterwheel was the 'largest in England.' This is difficult to prove and depends very much on the precise period concerned and which of the various estimates of the Benthall Wheel's size is believed."

He said a realistic estimate of its diameter was 60 feet. Despite traditions linking it with Benthall Ironworks, it seemed to have been a corn mill throughout its life, he says. A steam engine was installed in the mid-19th century to supplement the water power.

Edward Roden, a farmer, ran the mill from the 1840s to about 1880. The Davies family took over the tenancy in the 1880s, Owen Davies becoming miller. In the 1890s it was taken over by Adam Jones, a brick and tile maker. There followed a period of decline.

"In the twenties the owner, Lord Forester, sold the mill property to Luther Bennett who ran it for a few years charging accumulator batteries. However, in the 1930s he had the wheel dismantled and let the building for use as a slaughterhouse to Bill Pryce of Ironbridge," says Mr Briggs.

He adds: "It seems unjust and tragic, with so many less romantic industrial relics being preserved, that this unusual and once famous watermill, which dominated the view from Ironbridge for nearly 150 years, should now be forgotten."

As for the final demise, there is a story that it was sold to Oakley's in Broseley for scrap in 1935, but according to the firm what actually happened was that the wheel was sold to the Victoria Colliery in Wellington, and Edwin Oakley hauled it over there. What happened to it there? If you know, let us know.

Another discrepancy is that the firm said that the structure was mainly timber, with very little metal in it apart from the gears.



The picture of the bridge 60 years ago which we printed recently



Tim Lomas' comparison shot taken recently, showing how the trees have grown

Picture comparison as bridge identified

AFTER seeing a picture of an old bridge in Market Drayton which was published recently in the Chronicle's sister paper The Market Drayton Advertiser, Tim Lomas popped down there to take a modern comparison shot. And here you can admire the result.

The original print seems to date from July 1955 but did not say what bridge it was, merely having "Bridge on the Roman Road" handwritten on the back.

However, we were pretty sure it was the bridge over the River Tern at Market Drayton leading to Walkmill Road, and a number of readers, including Tim, have confirmed we were right.

"It's Walkmill Bridge. The bridge had been hit by a lorry on the far side, so there's a slight change in what the bridge looks like, but it's definitely that bridge. The trees have grown up since," he said.

The other question at issue is whether it is indeed on an old Roman road. Tim has his doubts about that.

"I understood the Roman track was further over and came up Dog Kennel Lane. It would be difficult to prove. There have been no signs of a Roman settlement at all in Drayton."

"I went down after I saw your picture to do a picture to match up. There are trees in the way of the houses now, they have all grown up."

Also getting in touch by email was Mike Weddle, who has told us there was a factory

MEMORY LANE

By Toby Neal

making nylon stockings next to the river on the right hand side of the picture. The bridge, incidentally, is Grade II listed, a status it gained relatively recently, in 1987.

As for that damage that Tim mentioned, the bridge has been repeatedly bashed in recent times.

One incident was in November 2010 when a lorry demolished most of its eastern parapet and then drove off. Most of the old parapet stone was damaged beyond re-use, with the upshot that new stone had to be cut to shape.

Repairs were done in May 2011, during which time the bridge was closed. But the cement can hardly have been dry on the repairs when there was "severe accident damage" to the parapet in June 2011 caused by two heavy goods vehicles.

This led to a closure in September of that year for repairs using some existing stone and some new coping stones. It also resulted in an 18-tonne weight limit being imposed on the bridge to stop lorries using the route.

According to Historic England, the bridge dates from 1783, with mid-19th century alterations, and is made of dressed red sandstone.

The keystone on the downstream side is inscribed "I.S. Fecit 1783." Fecit in Latin means he or she made it - so presumably it follows that the initials of the builder or architect were I.S.



Bashed again in July 2011 - the bridge had to undergo repairs

Fellow pioneer pupils help Adrian fill in the blanks

AND now they can be named...

Our recent feature putting the spotlight on the memories of Adrian Darrant, who was among the pioneer pupils at the Grove school in Market Drayton when it opened in September 1957, has resulted in one or two people contacting him to fill in some blanks for him.

Adrian went to the town's secondary modern school when his father, who was in the RAF, was posted to Tern Hill, and he was a pupil when the school moved from the town centre to the brand new buildings at the Grove.

He sent us a picture of himself - he's front, centre - with fellow pupils but was unable to name anybody, and also reminisced about teachers and also the Williams twins, a boy and a girl, whose father owned a garage in the town, saying he would love to hear what happened to them.

We still don't know what happened to them, but at least now know their first names because Adrian, a retired teacher who lives in Wheaton Aston these days,



Adrian with fellow pioneer pupils, front centre

soon received some feedback - by the way, if you have any more information for him, he is at adarrant@yahoo.co.uk on email.

"I have had two responses, he said.

"After this time I won't expect any more, but two is good. A Diana Lowe, who was Smith, replied and gave me the two teachers' names. One of them had died but she still sees and communicates with the other teacher. The teacher who has died was Connie Ford, whose married name was Gater, and the other one Elva King. I don't know if she married or not.

"I don't think Diana was on the photo but she does remember the Williams twins as Pauline and Ian. I have replied to her and will contact her again.

"The other response was from the brother of the boy standing on the right of the back row. The boy on the photo was Michael (Mick) Bradburn and his older brother who left in 1958 was Roger. He requested a copy of the photo, which I have done, and he gave me Mick's phone number. I will ring him up soon."

Adrian's link with the Grove was brief, as at Easter 1958 the family moved to Stafford.

The Grove became a comprehensive in 1965, so is celebrating its 50th anniversary as such this year.

Do you have any old pictures or tales from the past to share with our readers? Email toby.neal@shropshirestar.co.uk

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EastEnders actor John Altman appears in the Peter Pan panto



The Chuckle Brothers remain popular on children's television

Audience will have a chuckle at pantomime

TO scores of youngsters in Oswestry and Welshpool they are children's television's hilarious Chuckle Brothers.

But the famous pair will be stars of the stage for the next month or so when they appear in Wolverhampton's biggest show of the year.

The Grand Theatre's annual pantomime will attract tens of thousands of fans from across the region.

And this year's show features the exceptional Chuckle Brothers, Paul and Barry, with one of Britain's best villains, John Altman.

The Chuckle Brothers are planning a swashbuckling adventure to Neverland with Peter Pan, Wendy and the Lost Boys.

But they will have to fight against a team of pirates and the dastardly Captain Hook, played by EastEnders' bad boy Nasty Nick.

Paul and Barry are delighted that they'll be at the theatre until January 24.

They think of it as a home-from-home, having performed at the venue so often.

Paul said: "It's great to be back, we love Wolverhampton. It's the third panto we've done down the years and we're also here every year with our touring show."

Barry added: "It's the first time we've done Peter Pan. Out of 50 pantos, we've never done it until now."

Paul and Barry are looking forward to featuring with John Altman, who they've previously worked with.

Paul said: "The last time we worked with John was on a TV panto."

"We don't talk to him about Celebrity Coach Trip though."

"We were on the first one and we won it. He was a follow-up."

"It was good fun on there and we had two of the EastEnders on there with us. I wouldn't mind a soap. Coronation Street are always talking about us."

Barry added: "It would be Emmerdale for me. I think I'd be one of the Dingles."

"A dingle dangle in the dingle."

Altman is also glad to be back in Wolverhampton, having played the Grand on sev-

SPECIAL REPORT

By Andrew Richardson

eral occasions. He said: "I'm glad to be back in Wolverhampton, I've been here a few times. It's a lovely theatre. It's beautiful. I love the old theatres."

"In fact, I belong to the Cinema Theatre Association. They try and stop people demolishing old cinemas and theatres."

"I started my career in the Leeds Grand, which is a bit similar to the Wolverhampton Grand. It's very decorative with all the boxes and a proper backstage area."

Although best known as Nasty Nick, John's had a varied career.

He said: "I don't consider myself type-cast."

"I was doing a film the other day, some comedy in a movie called Perfect Break, it's a new snooker movie, a low budget Brit film."

"I play this dodgy manager, a bit of an Arthur Daley type."

"He's got acts on his book like Randy the ferret juggler. It's all class acts."

"I've done comedy in the theatre."

"A lot of actors say they can do so much more than people think, well I do say that because I can."

"Sometimes you get people saying: 'I know his work'."

"But often people who say that don't."

"They just think of Nick Cotton on EastEnders."

"I've done a whole load of stuff. In some people's eyes I am a bit typecast, but personally as an actor I feel I am not. There's a lot of other work I'd like to do."

Altman says playing Captain Hook is great fun - and he doesn't mind being booed.

"Getting on stage and playing Hook is very therapeutic. I'll say something rude about Wolves football club, that'll get them going!"

"They've done a really good job (with the show). They always pull the stops out and put on a class show."



The Chuckle Brothers star in this year's Wolverhampton panto, Peter Pan

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Entertaining concert raises cash for Wales Air Ambulance

AN all-ladies' choir put on their own style of entertainment when they sang their way to raising £3,400 for a life-saving charity with a costumed concert.

The Castle Belles, based in Llanfair Caereinion, held an evening of musical medleys at Llanfair Leisure Centre. The show was brought to life with the ladies dressed in costumes representing the various musicals from Oliver!, The Lion King and Mamma Mia!, culminating with the Time Warp.

Sara Thomas, spokeswoman for the choir, said: "The concert was a great success, raising vital funds for Wales Air Ambulance, a vital cause for local people."

"Several numbers had dance routines which proved very entertaining."

"Special thanks to Mandy Rees from Barclays Bank for her support on the evening, helping with the raffle and selling tickets."

"We are very grateful to Mandy for choosing our charity event to be funded via this fantastic scheme."

"The total amount raised for the evening, with the



£1,000 contribution from Barclays Bank, was a terrific £3,400 which is a fantastic amount and a great contribution towards Wales Air Ambulance."

Over the past few years the Castle Belles, led by Elaine Buckland, has raised £7,550 for various charities, including Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

Wales Air Ambulance provides an all Wales charity pro-

viding emergency air cover for those who face life-threatening illness or injuries.

The charity raises all the funds required for the day-to-day running of missions, with each mission on average costing £1,500.

Build

The charity currently has an appeal running to raise money to build a new airbase and hangar for one of its three helicopters. The new home will be purpose-built with the latest technology and facilities for its lifesaving crews and aircraft. The charity needs to raise £500,000 to help build the airbase in Dafen, which will house its South Wales helicopter.

Wales Air Ambulance relies entirely on charitable donations to keep the helicopters flying. The new hangar and helipad will be funded solely by the people of Wales.

The charity says that with a new airbase, its staff will be able to save even more lives for years to come.

● **Photo – Members of the choir with Diana Rowlands, from Wales Air Ambulance, and Amanda Rees from Barclays Bank**



Still Open All Hours

8pm

Granville and Gastric try to get Madge into the festive spirit by organising a cosy drinks party. Meanwhile, a bargain Christmas tree causes problems, Nurse Gladys discusses tactics for her new job with Mrs Featherstone and Eric and Cyril attempt to impress their wives with a healthy living plan.



A Gert Lush Christmas

9pm

Dan Colman is about to introduce the woman of his dreams, Lisa, to his crazy but adorable Bristolian family at Christmas. But with his fitness-obsessed dad, party animal Uncle Tony, inappropriate brother Jake, and lovely but bonkers mum, it may not go according to plan.



Surprise Surprise

7pm

Holly Willoughby delivers the perfect Christmas presents to deserving members of the public in a festive edition of the show. Olympic gold medal-winning rowing champion James Cracknell surprises an injured soldier, who is in the process of preparing to row across the Atlantic Ocean



Fantastic Mr Fox

11.25am

A rebellious fox decides it is time to grow up and change his chicken-stealing ways for the sake of his wife and children. However, the presence of three wicked farmers near his woodland home proves a challenge he cannot resist. Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voice of George Clooney.



Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud

7.05pm

Iain Lee narrates a compilation of amusing and outrageous Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips. Examples include the unpredictable reactions of youngsters.

BBC1	
6.00	Breakfast.
10.00	Christmas Saturday Kitchen. With Christopher Biggins, Eric Chavot, Pascal Aussignac and Nadiya Hussain.
11.30	James Martin – Home Comforts at Christmas. (R)
12.15	BBC News; Weather.
12.25	Football Focus. Dan Walker reviews the week's action.
1.00	Comic Relief 2015: Thanks a Billion! Lenny Henry revisits comedy highlights from this year's charity event.
2.00	Wallace & Gromit: A Grand Day Out. The animated heroes go to the moon. (R)
2.25	A Grand Night In: The Story of Aardman. A celebration of the animation studio.
3.25	FILM: Puss in Boots (2011). Animated comedy spin-off, with the voice of Antonio Banderas.
4.45	FILM: The Croods (2013). Premiere. Animated comedy, with the voice of Nicolas Cage, Emma Stone and Ryan Reynolds.
6.10	Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas. The mischievous sheep meets three trouble-making llamas at a country fair, and sensing kindred spirits, he invites them home to Mossy Bottom farm – with disastrous results.
6.40	BBC News.
6.50	Midlands Today; Weather.
7.00	Dickensian. New series. Period drama re-imagining the works of Charles Dickens as inter-connected tales, beginning as ruthless debt collector Jacob Marley makes himself an enemy.
7.30	EastEnders. Kat tells Martin that Alfie is still in Spain – unaware he is not far behind her – and Dean is angry with Shirley after she ruins his plans for Christmas dinner.
8.00	Still Open All Hours. New series. Christmas edition of the comedy, starring David Jason, Lynda Baron and Tim Healy.
8.30	Dickensian. Christmas Day arrives and Inspector Bucket begins his investigation into Jacob Marley's murder, and at Satis House, Amelia Havisham's mysterious rescuer makes another appearance.
9.00	And Then There Were None. New series. Ten strangers are stranded on a remote island, and learn there may be a killer in their midst. Period mystery, starring Anna Maxwell Martin. Continues tomorrow.
10.00	BBC News; Weather.
10.20	The National Lottery Live. Ore Oduba introduces the all-important Lotto and Thunderball draws, and a special festive performance by Collabro.
10.30	Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the full programme of Premier League games, including Chelsea v Watford, Manchester City v Sunderland and Stoke City v Manchester United; National Lottery Update.
12.05	FILM: The Guardian (2006). Drama, starring Kevin Costner.
2.15	Weather for the Week Ahead.
2.20	BBC News.

BBC2	
6.00	Race to Super Bowl 50. Action from the week 15 fixtures. (R)
6.50	Flog It! Paul Martin and the team value antiques in Sheffield. (R)
7.35	FILM: Tom Thumb (1958). Children's musical fantasy, starring Russ Tambllyn.
9.05	FILM: Hotel for Dogs (2009). Family comedy, starring Emma Roberts and Jake T Austin.
10.35	Ten Pieces II. The BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and guests perform recitals of 10 classical works.
11.35	FILM: G-Force (2009). Children's adventure, starring Bill Nighy and the voice of Sam Rockwell.
1.00	Attenborough's Big Birds: Natural World. David Attenborough examines the world of flightless birds. (R)
2.00	Attenborough's Paradise Birds. David Attenborough examines the appeal of birds of paradise. (R)
3.00	FILM: Bedtime Stories (2008). Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler.
4.30	Final Score. A round-up of this afternoon's football results.
5.30	Don't Panic! The Dad's Army Story. Victoria Wood celebrates the comedy. (R)
6.20	We're Doomed!: The Dad's Army Story. Comedy drama about how Jimmy Perry and David Croft overcame BBC management scepticism and focus groups to get the sitcom Dad's Army on air. Starring Paul Ritter and Richard Dormer. (R)
7.20	Dad's Army. Frazer is unable to hide his delight when Captain Mainwaring's disreputable brother gatecrashes a sherry party for local dignitaries. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)
8.00	Top Gear: From A to Z. John Bishop narrates the first of two programmes celebrating the highlights of the Jeremy Clarkson, James May and Richard Hammond era, via an alphabetical list.
9.00	A Gert Lush Christmas. Comedian Russell Howard's debut comedy drama.
10.00	Abz on the Christmas Farm. Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicky Fallon spend Christmas reflecting on the successes and failures of their year running a smallholder farm in Wales.
10.30	Backchat End of Year Show 2015. Jack Whitehall and his father Michael review the past 12 months, picking apart some of the highs and lows of 2015 in an end-of-year special.
11.30	FILM: Kinky Boots (2005). A man inherits a struggling shoe factory and finds salvation for his business in a drag artist's need for custom footwear. Comedy drama, starring Chiwetel Ejiofor and Joel Edgerton.
1.15	FILM: Marnie (1964). A habitual thief is caught stealing from her boss, who blackmails her into marriage in return for his silence. Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Sean Connery and Tippi Hedren.
3.20	Sign Zone: Imagine – The Ecstasy of Wilko Johnson. Documentary charting the guitarist's battle against cancer. (R)
4.55	This is BBC2. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV	
6.00	CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge 6.25 Pat & Stan 6.30 Pat & Stan 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures 6.50 Dino Dan 7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story 7.05 Oddbods 7.10 Sooty 7.25 Super 4 7.40 Mr Bean: The Animated Series 7.50 Mr Bean: The Animated Series 8.00 The Aquabats! Super Show! 8.30 Thunderbirds Are Go 9.00 The Tom & Jerry Show 9.15 The Tom & Jerry Show 9.25 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas. Stop-motion animated adventure based on the film Elf. (R)
10.25	You've Been Framed! Featuring lookalikes of Matthew Kelly. (R)
10.55	FILM: Back to the Future Part III (1990). Time-travelling teenager Marty McFly is transported back to the Wild West to save his scientist friend from death. Sci-fi comedy sequel, with Michael J Fox and Christopher Lloyd.
1.05	ITV News and Weather.
1.20	FILM: Jurassic Park (1993). Genetically engineered dinosaurs escape from an eccentric tycoon's safari park and go on the rampage. Steven Spielberg's adventure, with Sam Neill, Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblum.
3.40	Midsomer Murders. A man's apparent suicide shocks the village of Morton Fendle – but things take a sinister turn when Barnaby and Jones discover the victim was not alone when he died. (R)
5.40	ITV News and Weather.
6.00	The Nation's Favourite Disney Song. A tribute to classic Disney tracks from across the decades, featuring interviews with a selection of the actors and lyricists involved in making them.
7.00	Surprise Surprise. Holly Willoughby delivers Christmas presents to members of the public, including an injured soldier preparing to row across the Atlantic and a young heart transplant survivor.
8.00	Peter & Wendy. In a re-imagining of Peter Pan, a patient at Great Ormond Street Hospital dreams of the classic tale, stepping into Wendy's shoes to help Peter battle Captain Hook.
10.05	The Jonathan Ross Show Christmas Special. The host dispenses with his questions, and instead invites guests Ian McKellen, Aziz Ansari, Lily James and Fiona Bruce to take part in light-hearted games. Last in the series.
11.10	ITV News; Weather.
11.25	FILM: From Russia with Love (1963). James Bond is assigned to steal a top-secret Soviet decoding machine – but the mission is a trap set by crime syndicate Spectre. Spy thriller, with Sean Connery and Robert Shaw.
1.25	Jackpot247. Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.00	Murder, She Wrote. Cabot Cove becomes the scene of deadly competition when an eccentric recluse dies, and Jessica is given the dubious honour of executing the woman's will. (R)
3.50	ITV Nightscreen.

Channel 4	
6.15	FILM: Ramona and Beezus (2010). Family comedy, starring Joey King.
8.00	The Morning Line. Nick Luck and guests are at Kempton Park to preview today's races.
9.00	The Big Bang Theory. Leonard fails to get Sheldon into the Christmas mood. (R)
9.30	The Big Bang Theory. The gang reflects on how Sheldon has changed their lives. (R)
10.00	The Big Bang Theory. Amy hosts a Christmas Eve dinner. (R)
10.25	The Simpsons. Bart destroys the family's Christmas presents. (R)
10.55	The Simpsons. A corporation buys Springfield Elementary School. (R)
11.25	FILM: Fantastic Mr Fox (2009). Stop-motion animated adventure, with the voice of George Clooney.
1.10	Channel 4 Racing. Nick Luck and Rishi Persad present live coverage of five races from Kempton Park and Wetherby, including the 3.10 King George VI Chase.
3.30	FILM: Home Alone 3 (1997). Comedy sequel, starring Alex D Linz.
5.25	Channel 4 News.
5.35	The Secret Life of Children at Christmas. The children are reunited to perform their own nativity play. (R)
6.30	Britain's Favourite Children's Books with David Walliams. The comedy actor counts down through a list of the nation's most beloved children's books, while other celebrity fans read extracts from the selected tales.
8.00	Inside Lego at Christmas. Cameras return to the Lego factory ahead of Christmas to discover how staff prepare for the festive season, which accounts for more than half of the firm's annual sales.
9.00	The Big Fat Quiz of the Year 2015. Rob Brydon, Richard Ayoade, David Mitchell, Claudia Winkleman, Greg Davies and Jo Brand reveal whether they have their fingers on the pulse of modern life in the annual quiz.
11.05	Rude Tube Christmas Cracker. Alex Zane presents 50 festive internet clips that have proved popular around the world, including a turkey with a boob job and an inventive Christmas tree decoration-remover. (R)
12.10	Alan Carr: Chatty Man Christmas Special. Alan is joined by Samuel L Jackson, John Bishop, Catherine Tate's Nan, Keith Lemon, Emma Willis and Marvin Humes. Plus, music by Little Mix and One Direction. Last in the series. (R)
2.05	Rude Tube. Alex Zane counts down the Top 50 online videos devoted to love, sex, marriage, dating and everything in between.
3.00	Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Ziggy and Celine find Ste sleeping outside after another binge and rush him to hospital, while Reenie receives an invitation to Derek's will reading. (R)
5.10	Location, Location, Location. Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer revisit two families who were selling up to fund their dream business. (R)

Channel 5	
6.00	Milkshake! Peppa Pig 6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas 6.20 Bob the Builder 6.30 Ticky Toc 6.55 Milkshake! Bop Box 7.00 Zack and Quack 7.10 Milkshake! Monkey 7.15 Make Way for Noddy 7.25 Paw Patrol 7.40 Little Princess 7.50 Pip Ahoy! 8.05 Blaze and the Monster Machines 8.25 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom 8.45 Wanda and the Alien 8.55 Toby's Travelling Circus
9.10	The Saturday Show. Topical show looking at the week's headlines.
11.10	The Dog Rescuers at Christmas with Alan Davies. Alan Davies throws a party for some of the series' stars. (R)
12.10	The Secret Life of Marilyn Monroe. Biopic, starring Kelli Garner and Susan Sarandon.
3.15	FILM: Diana (2013). Premiere. Fact-based drama, starring Naomi Watts.
5.05	FILM: One Chance (2013). Premiere. Fact-based comedy drama, starring James Corden.
7.05	Christmas Makes You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee presents Christmas-themed videos that have taken the internet by storm in a seasonal special showcasing hilarious online clips with a festive twist. (R)
8.05	Chas & Dave's Xmas Knees Up! Festive entertainment from 1982, which sees the Cockney duo joined by celebrity guests Eric Clapton, Jimmy Cretick, Jim Davidson, Albert Lee and Lennie Peters. (R)
9.00	Football League Tonight: Boxing Day Special. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the packed Boxing Day fixture list, including Hull City v Burnley and Derby County v Fulham in the Championship.
10.30	Most Shocking Christmas TV Moments. A merry romp through the most inappropriate, outrageous and appallingly atrocious Christmas television turkeys of all time, featuring contributions from some of those involved.
12.30	Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Christmas Special. The debt collection agents grapple with moral dilemmas during the festive period, including a young family who are made homeless when the landlord repossesses their home. (R)
1.25	SuperCasino. Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
3.10	Kids' Hospital at Christmas: Revisited. Catching up with the six children who featured in the series to see how their lives have progressed since filming the documentary in 2014, including three-year-old Gracie. (R)
4.00	Chris Tarrant on the Polar Express. Chris embarks on a 2,000-mile railway trip from Moscow to Arctic Siberia. (R)
4.50	Make It Big. The raffle money goes missing. (R)
5.15	Make It Big. First episode of the reality show following 12 young entrepreneurs. (R)
5.45	Angels of Jarm. (R)
5.50	Angels of Jarm. (R)



Miranda Hart - My What I Call Live Show

11pm
A filmed performance from the comedian's nationwide stand-up tour, combining stand-up comedy, sketches, songs and dance and featuring anecdotes ranging from flautent first dates to socially inept children.



Dragons' Den

8pm
Entrepreneurs Peter Jones, Deborah Meaden, Nick Jenkins, Sarah Willingham and Touker Suleyman return to cast their eyes over more business pitches. Among the ideas being presented are a product designed to conceal grey hairs and a company that organises zombie boot camps.



Premiership Rugby Union

11.45pm
Action from the latest round of fixtures in England's top flight, including Harlequins v Gloucester at Twickenham in Big Game 8. Plus, highlights of Bath v Worcester Warriors at the Recreation Ground, Wasps v Saracens at the Ricoh Arena and Exeter Chiefs v Sale Sharks at Sandy Park.



Walking the Himalayas

8pm
Following explorer Levison Wood as he attempts to walk the entire length of the Himalayas. Beginning in Afghanistan, he will push himself to his physical limits as he treks 1,700 miles across the roof of the world, teaming up with local guides and meeting soldiers, monks and nomadic tribes.



Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2015

9pm
Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year, including Bruce Jenner's transition to Caitlyn, the Top Gear bust-up involving Jeremy Clarkson and bad behaviour from repeat offenders such as Justin Bieber.

BBC1

- 6.00** **Breakfast.**
- 7.40** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of Chelsea v Watford. (R)
- 9.15** **FILM: Flushed Away (2006).** Animated comedy, featuring the voice of Hugh Jackman.
- 10.35** **FILM: Megamind (2010).** Animated superhero comedy, with the voice of Will Ferrell.
- 12.00** **Bargain Hunt.** Scouring for antiques in Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire.
- 1.00** **BBC News;** Weather.
- 1.15** **Songs of Praise.** Musical and religious stories from the past year.
- 1.50** **FILM: Mary Poppins (1964).** A practically perfect Edwardian nanny with magical powers brings fun into the humdrum lives of two children. Disney's musical fantasy, starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke.
- 4.05** **FILM: Oz the Great and Powerful (2013).** Premiere. Fantasy adventure, starring James Franco.
- 6.05** **BBC News.**
- 6.20** **Midlands Today;** Weather.
- 6.30** **Countryfile Compilation: The Farming Year.** Adam Henson presents a look back at 2015's rural developments, presenting memorable moments from the series and planning ahead on his own farm. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.
- 7.30** **Dickensian.** Bucket is convinced that Fagin had a part to play in Marley's murder, and sets off in pursuit of his partner in crime Bill Sikes. Frances plots to ruin her sister's plans.
- 8.00** **Still Open All Hours.** Granville holds a sale to get rid of his old stock, Nurse Gladys runs to a former patient, and Mrs Featherstone has romance in mind when the neighbourhood has a new arrival.
- 8.30** **Dickensian.** Amelia is troubled by the arrival of an unexpected guest at the Havishams' New Year's party, while Frances rekindles an old friendship, which she hopes will lead to something more.
- 9.00** **And Then There Were None.** The death toll on Soldier Island continues to rise. The surviving guests make plans to end the killings, but as they do, the dreadful secrets they are hiding are brought to light. Concludes tomorrow.
- 10.00** **BBC News.**
- 10.15** **Midlands Today;** Weather.
- 10.25** **Catherine Tate's Nan.** The first of two specials featuring the foul-mouthed pensioner. Nan's aggressive attitude gets her into trouble with the police and she is forced to attend anger management classes.
- 11.00** **Miranda Hart - My What I Call Live Show.** A performance from the comedian's nationwide tour.
- 12.00** **FILM: Ghost Town (2008).** A bad-tempered dentist gains the ability to see ghosts and is forced to help them sort out their unresolved problems. Comedy, starring Ricky Gervais, Greg Kinnear and Tea Leoni.
- 1.35** **Weather for the Week Ahead.**
- 1.40** **BBC News.**

BBC2

- 6.20** **Big Dreams Small Spaces.** Monty Don helps create two gardens inspired by Norway and Japan. Last in the series. (R)
- 7.20** **Countryfile: Cornish Coastal Christmas.** Festive reports from Truro, the Cornish fishing village of Coverack, and Hampshire. (R)
- 8.15** **FILM: A Man for All Seasons (1966).** Oscar-winning historical drama, starring Paul Scofield and Robert Shaw.
- 10.15** **Saturday Kitchen Best Bites.** Highlights of the series.
- 11.45** **The Hairy Bikers and Lorraine Pascale: Cooking the Nation's Favourite Food.** The cooks offer their twists on the UK's 10 best-loved meals. (R)
- 12.45** **The Secret Life of Mary Poppins: A Culture Show Special.** Victoria Coren Mitchell explores the life of writer PL Travers. (R)
- 1.45** **FILM: The Cockleshell Heroes (1955).** Fact-based Second World War drama, with Jose Ferrer.
- 3.20** **FILM: The Heroes of Telemark (1965).** Second World War thriller, starring Kirk Douglas and Richard Harris.
- 5.25** **Porridge.** Christmas special from 1975. The inmates plan a Christmas escape. (R)
- 6.10** **FILM: Deep Impact (1998).** A reporter investigating a presidential misdemeanour stumbles on evidence that a comet is on a collision course with Earth. Sci-fi drama, starring Robert Duvall and Tea Leoni.
- 8.00** **Dragons' Den.** The panel cast their eyes over another selection of business pitches, including a product designed to conceal grey hairs and a zombie boot camp. Presented by Evan Davis.
- 9.00** **Gorilla Family and Me.** Part two of two. Gordon Buchanan returns to the Democratic Republic of Congo and revisits the gorilla family, only to find their lives are now under threat from poachers.
- 10.00** **U2: Innocence and Experience Live in Paris.** Footage from various performances by the rock band in the French capital, featuring tracks from their most recent album Songs of Innocence as well as classic hits.
- 12.15** **FILM: Telstar: The Joe Meek Story (2008).** Biopic charting the career of the influential 1960s record producer, who was ultimately brought down by depression and paranoia. With Con O'Neill, Kevin Spacey and Pam Ferris.
- 2.10** **Sign Zone: Countryfile: Cornish Coastal Christmas.** Festive reports from Truro, the Cornish fishing village of Coverack, and Hampshire. (R)
- 3.05** **Sign Zone: Holby City.** Troubled nurse Fran returns to Holby and is determined to get Jac's full attention, with near tragic consequences, while Sacha treats the man who bullied him at school. (R)
- 4.05** **Sign Zone: Cue the Queen: Celebrating the Christmas Speech.** The history of the monarch's annual televised address to the nation. (R)
- 5.05** **This Is BBC2.**

ITV

- 6.00** **CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge**
- 6.25** **Pat & Stan**
- 6.30** **Pat & Stan**
- 6.35** **Dino Dan**
- 6.50** **Dino Dan**
- 7.00** **Signed Stories: Share a Story**
- 7.05** **Oddbods**
- 7.10** **Sooty**
- 7.25** **Super 4**
- 7.40** **Mr Bean: The Animated Series**
- 7.50** **Mr Bean: The Animated Series**
- 8.00** **The Aquabats! Super Show!**
- 8.25** **Countrywise.** Series exploring the UK's countryside. (R)
- 9.25** **Countrywise.** Series exploring the UK's countryside. (R)
- 9.55** **Celebrity Squares.** With Frank Skinner. (R)
- 10.40** **FILM: Superman (1978).** Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve.
- 1.30** **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 1.45** **FILM: Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007).** Fantasy comedy, starring Dustin Hoffman and Natalie Portman.
- 3.35** **Midsomer Murders.** A rock band's reunion seems doomed. (R)
- 5.30** **ITV News Central;** Weather.
- 5.45** **ITV News and Weather.**
- 6.00** **You've Been Framed! With Bells On.** Camcorder clips with a festive theme, including a pensioner throwing fireworks at carol singers, a Christmas fairy going up in flames, and a smartphone found inside a turkey. (R)
- 6.30** **Jekyll and Hyde.** Robert goes into hiding in the country with Ravi and Olalla, but he is soon tracked down by a shape-shifting monster that disguises itself as Lily to deceive him.
- 7.30** **Jekyll and Hyde.** A revived Dance launches an attack on MIO to complete his mission and resurrect Lord Trash, while Robert discovers that one of his friends has lied to him. Last in the series.
- 8.30** **Harry Price: Ghost Hunter.** Famous ghost hunter and sceptic Harry Price teams up with maid Sarah Grey to investigate the haunting of a local MP's home. Historical period drama, starring Rafe Spall.
- 10.30** **ITV News and Weather;** Weather.
- 10.45** **Through the Christmas Keyhole.** Keith Lemon has a festive rummage through the homes of three celebrities, challenging Stephen Mulhern, Claudia Winkleman and Jimmy Carr to guess their identities. Last in the series. (R)
- 11.45** **Premiership Rugby Union.** Action from the latest round of fixtures in England's top flight, including Harlequins v Gloucester at Twickenham, Bath v Worcester Warriors and Wasps v Saracens.
- 12.35** **Jackpot247.** Viewers get the chance to participate in live interactive gaming from the comfort of their sofas, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
- 3.00** **The Jeremy Kyle Show USA.** The host takes his successful talk show stateside. (R)
- 3.40** **ITV Nightscreen.**
- 5.05** **The Jeremy Kyle Show.** The host invites guests to air their differences over family and relationship issues, and provides them with his own brand of no-nonsense advice. (R)

Channel 4

- 6.05** **FILM: Flicka 2 (2010).** Family drama, starring Tammin Sursok.
- 7.40** **FILM: Paws (1997).** Family adventure, with the voice of Billy Connolly.
- 9.20** **Sunday Brunch.** With guests Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, Johnny Vegas and Kym Marsh.
- 12.20** **The Simpsons.** Marge allows her hair to turn grey. (R)
- 12.45** **The Simpsons.** Guest starring Ricky Gervais and Russell Brand. (R)
- 1.10** **Channel 4 Racing.** Live coverage from Chepstow and Kempton Park.
- 3.35** **FILM: Hugo (2011).** Family adventure, starring Asa Butterfield.
- 4.00** **Channel 4 News.**
- 6.00** **Celebrity Fifteen to One Christmas Special.** Adam Hills hosts a festive edition of the tit-for-tat general knowledge quiz, featuring 15 celebrities competing to win a big cash prize for charity. (R)
- 7.00** **Million Pound Motors.** Documentary following a vintage car salesman as he attempts to purchase a valuable collection of rare vehicles, while his apprentice struggles to secure his first sale.
- 8.00** **Walking the Himalayas.** New series. Explorer Levison Wood attempts to walk the entire length of the Himalayas. Beginning in Afghanistan, he will push himself to the limit as he treks 1,700 miles.
- 9.00** **Homeland.** Time is running out in the conclusion of the fifth series of the thriller following a team of CIA agents battling terrorists. Claire Danes stars. Last in the series.
- 10.00** **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown Christmas Special.** Jimmy Carr hosts a festive edition of the comedy panel quiz, with Johnny Vegas joining Sean Lock to take on Jon Richardson and Katherine Ryan. (R)
- 11.00** **FILM: The Inbetweeners 2 (2014).** The awkward teenagers find university does not live up to their expectations, and go to Australia in search of adventure. Comedy sequel, starring Simon Bird and James Buckley.
- 12.55** **The Inbetweeners.** The lads visit a Caravan Club meeting. (R)
- 1.25** **The Inbetweeners.** Will organises the Christmas prom. (R)
- 1.55** **The Inbetweeners.** Will helps co-ordinate the school's Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. (R)
- 2.20** **The Inbetweeners.** The friends prepare for their exams. (R)
- 2.50** **FILM: That Touch of Mink (1962).** A millionaire playboy woos a strait-laced secretary, but while he only wants a casual affair, she is saving herself for marriage. Romantic comedy, starring Cary Grant and Doris Day.
- 4.30** **Benchmark.** Game show in which contestants decide how 10 people answered a series of tricky numerical questions - then choose whether to go higher or lower.
- 5.15** **Location, Location, Location.** Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer revisit two couples who wanted a dream life in the country. (R)

Channel 5

- 6.00** **Milkshake!** Peppa Pig
- 6.05** **Bananas** in Pyjamas
- 6.15** **Angelina Ballerina**
- 6.30** **Bob the Builder**
- 6.45** **Tickety Toc**
- 6.55** **Zack and Quack**
- 7.05** **Roobarb and Custard Too**
- 7.15** **Make Way for Noddy**
- 7.30** **Paw Patrol**
- 7.40** **Little Princess**
- 7.55** **Pip Ahoy!**
- 8.10** **Blaze and the Monster Machines**
- 8.40** **Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom**
- 8.55** **Wanda and the Alien**
- 9.10** **Toby's Travelling Circus**
- 9.25** **Jelly Jamm**
- 9.35** **LazyTown**
- 10.00** **Mr Men**
- 10.15** **Football League Tonight: Boxing Day Special.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present highlights from the Football League. (R)
- 11.45** **FILM: Cromwell (1970).** Historical drama, starring Richard Harris.
- 2.25** **FILM: The Searchers (1956).** John Ford's Western, starring John Wayne.
- 4.45** **FILM: Escape to Victory (1981).** Second World War adventure, starring Michael Caine.
- 7.00** **World's Strongest Man 2015.** Action from the opening heat of the competition in Malaysia. British hopes were resting on the broad shoulders of the likes of Eddie Hall and Mark Felix.
- 7.55** **5 News Weekend.**
- 8.00** **On Benefits: Cashing in for Christmas.** Christmas for people living on state welfare, including a woman struggling to buy gifts for her eight children and two friends who rummage through shops' bins. (R)
- 9.00** **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2015.** Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year, including Bruce Jenner's transition to Caitlyn and the Top Gear bust-up involving Jeremy Clarkson.
- 11.55** **The Last Hours of Robin Williams.** Forensic pathologist Dr Richard Shepherd investigates the death of actor and comedian Robin Williams, whose body was discovered at his San Francisco home in August 2014. (R)
- 12.55** **SuperCasino.** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team.
- 3.10** **A Primary School Nativity.** One-off edition of the documentary about life at Gascogne Primary School in Barking, east London, this time following staff and pupils during the hectic build-up to Christmas. (R)
- 4.00** **House Doctor.** Ann Maurice shows homeowners near Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, how to inject a touch of character into their bland property to make it more appealing. (R)
- 4.25** **Make It Big.** Things are not going to plan for Graham. (R)
- 4.50** **Make It Big.** The youngsters must organise a charity auction, to be held in six weeks' time, but the team seems more intent on having fun than working. (R)
- 5.20** **Make It Big.** Simon and Jamie get verbal warnings. (R)
- 5.45** **Angels of Jarm.** Wendy is scared of Fatima's mum. (R)
- 5.50** **Angels of Jarm.** Angel Rafe protects the children in the kitchen. (R)



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Patients, staff and TNS players line-up for a team shot at Alice Ward at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital. Photos: Peter Flemmich.



Father Christmas and The New Saints' mascot Spot the Dog joined players to hand out the gifts

Saints provide festive cheer

FOOTBALLERS from Oswestry's The New Saints FC bought extra presents when they fitted Christmas shopping into their busy training programme.

For the players at the club bought gifts for the children and young people who are patients at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital.

The Welsh Premier League champions have their ground at The Venue at Park Hall, less than a mile from the specialist orthopaedic hospital. Members of the first team visited the hospital, along with Father Christmas and their team mascot, Spot the Dog.

The mascot proved one of the highlights of the visit for the patients.

They dropped into Alice Ward which looks after children and teenagers and handed out presents to the patients. The soccer players had even taken along presents for the staff. This year the footballers were responsible themselves for buying the presents and wrapping them. They also handed out TNS memorabilia including shirts and scarves.

First team manager Craig Harrison joined

Report by Sue Austin

the players and said he was more than happy to support the event. He said: "It was nice to see the smiles on the faces of the patients and their families. I really hope they enjoyed our visit. The children are really brave and it was great to give them presents."

Forward Greg Draper said: "The children and their parents have to go through such a lot."

"I hope our visit cheered them up for a while. "We were talking to a little four year old who had been in a body cast. To see her walking around was wonderful for us and it must have been brilliant for her parents."

Lynwen Morris, play specialist on Alice Ward, said everyone had enjoyed the visit.

She said: "We were so grateful to everyone from TNS for coming to visit the children on the ward. They all had a lovely time and really appreciated the presents, shirts and scarves."

"Visits like this make such a difference at this time of year. It is not easy for anyone to be in hospital at Christmas time, especially a child, but events like this really help, so we want to thank TNS for their generosity and support."



Player Greg Draper hands over a present to Keith Parry, Ruby Parry and Jade Burke



Matty Williams meets Alun and Ela Owen at the hospital



Chris Marriott, Jamie Reid and James Jones meet patient Jake Domagalski



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Dr Elaine Storkey spoke at Adcote School



Lakelands Academy students have backed the Kenyan Schools Project



Staff at the Marches School got into the Movember fundraising spirit

Children kept busy

Report by Sue Austin

SCHOOLCHILDREN throughout the area have been busy with a host of activities.

A group of volunteers in Powys who encouraged children to take part in a reading challenge were rewarded for their efforts with certificates.

A Moreton Hall schoolgirl earned a place in the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Great Britain.

Jemima Pickersgill has been invited to attend a 10 day residential course at Easter and then a course in Switzerland in the summer with her talent at playing the clarinet.

Primary school children enjoyed a multi-cultural afternoon when they were challenged to learn five different languages at Oswestry School.

Youngsters at Packwood Haugh School in Ruyton XI Towns were kept busy filling shoeboxes with gifts as part of the Operation Christmas Child initiative.

Students at Lakelands Academy in Ellesmere have continued the school's support of the Kenyan Schools Project. Recent activities raised £500 which was presented to the charity's patrons Bill and Lynne Morris.

Key Stage 2 pupils at Carreghofa Primary School in Llanymynech, near Oswestry, performed a Christmas play with a difference.

The youngsters studied space during the autumn term and carried the topic over into their Christmas preparations, including singing songs about space in their nativity performance. UN representative Dr Elaine Storkey gave a talk at Adcote School to senior school girls about her book *Scars Against Humanity*.

And Marches School staff and students raised more than £1,000 for charity by taking part in the Movember fundraising project. Moustaches were worn and face painting was offered.



Osian Williams, Massimo Wyatt and Molly Bowyer from Carreghofa School



Megan Kulig-Beach and Archie Barr took part in a language day



Young volunteers received certificates for backing a reading challenge in Powys



Talented musician Jemima Pickersgill



Packwood Haugh students supported Operation Christmas Child's shoebox appeal



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Lucy Allinson, Eliza Kiel, Ruth Jefferis and Mary Richardson took part in a reading competition



Selina Schoelles is a top geography student



Oswestry's Woodside Primary School pupils wearing their graduation mortar board during the trip to Chester University

Students keen to show talents

STUDENTS in and around Oswestry have been demonstrating their knowledge and talents.

Selina Schoelles, who is a boarder at Moreton Hall School, was named the highest achieving IGCSE geography student in the UK following this year's exams. She scored an impressive 97 per cent across all three geography papers, one of her 12 A*s at GCSE.

Primary school pupils in the area got a taste of university life when they visited Chester University for a day.

The 60 Year 6 pupils were invited to take part in the trip as part of The Marches Futures Award, organised by The Marches School, Oswestry.

The Marches Sixth Form in Oswestry elected the leaders of its student council.

Ish Rashid and Phoebe Jones were chosen by their Year 12 peers to lead the 2015-2016 sixth form student council. Will Napper and Ellie Derbyshire were chosen as their deputies.

More than 30 youngsters took to the podium to read passages from The Book of Common Prayer as they competed in the annual Sarah Parkes Competition.

Report by Sue Austin

The competition, created by Dr Giles Parkes in memory of his late daughter Sarah, was held at Moreton Hall School.

Year 10 pupil Lucy Allinson from Nantwich won the junior section with runner up Year 10 Eliza Kiel, from Oswestry. The senior winner was Year 13 student Mary Richardson from Ellesmere, with runner up Ruth Jefferis, in Year 12, from Oswestry.

Marches School pupil Richard Jandrell has become double National Champion at the World Kickboxing Association British Nationals.

The 13-year-old has been competing since he was five and trains up to five times a week with his instructor, three-time World Champion, Brian Nelson.

Still on the sports theme, youngsters from The Marches had a chance to try out sailing thanks to a new initiative.

The teenagers took to the water at White-mere, near Ellesmere, to learn how to skipper sailing dinghies. The project was run in collaboration with Shropshire Sailing Club, via Sport Oswestry and Energize.



Marches Sixth Form presidents Ish Rashid and Phoebe Jones



Richard Jandrell with his trophies



The Marches Students at the Shropshire Sailing Club

Top ten tips for choosing perfect tiles to suit you



GREAT tile design allows you to stamp individuality on your home and can help you to create a unique look and feel.

With hundreds of styles to choose from, selecting the right tiles for your home can feel daunting, so our tile specialists have compiled their top 10 tips for choosing your perfect tiles:

1. Try before you buy – Use online tools to plan your design. Check out iDesign, an interactive online tool that will help you transform ideas into reality (all from the comfort of your own home)

It's easy-to-use and has a step-by-step guide that will help you visualise your dream tile design (<http://www.tilegiant.co.uk/ideign>) before you make the commitment to buy.

2. Ask the experts – Once you've decided on the look and feel that you want for your room, speak to an expert in a Tile Giant store and find out if the tiles you've selected work well for the room's function – remember, you will need extra hardwearing tiles for the main living areas of your home to cope with the rigours of every day life.

3. Measuring matters – Unfortunately, not all rooms are a simple square. Your in-store tile expert will give you guidelines of how to measure your space. Don't forget, no matter how accurate your measurements are, make sure you order spares for those annoying little accidents.



4. Go bold – Selecting a vibrant colour can be scary at first, but adding even splashes of bright colours to your design can transform the look and feel of your space, making even the smallest room a statement.

5. Size matters – Although we love the large tile formats, one of the biggest new tile trends is for delicate sparkling glass mosaics – the perfect optical illusion for your smaller spaces. These reflective tiles will make any room feel luxurious.

6. Usability – It really helps when designing your room to think about HOW you want it to be used.

If your kitchen is for combining conversation, canapés and cocktails – your kitchen flooring needs to not only look the dream, but also be hardwearing enough to cope with the spilt champagne and giletto scratches.

7. Don't forget the grout – You don't just need to think of grout as a boring necessity. You can now get amazing coloured grouts (and even a sparkly glitter grout) that can add a real twist to your tile design.

Try adding a red grout to a slate grey tile, or a bright blue to really brighten up your yellow tiles – the opportunities are endless.

8. Step onto warmth – Under tile heating may seem like a huge extravagance, but it can actually be an affordable method of heat distribution in comparison to conventional heaters (such as radiators).

And a big plus is that there's nothing better than stepping out of bed onto a pre-heated floor, bliss.

9. Uncover the alternatives – If mucky puppy paws and dirty wellies are an everyday annoyance for you, real wood floors might be a far off dream, no matter how much you love the look. But don't fear. Now you can get your hands on amazing alternative wood effect floor tiles that are hardwearing and water resistant – delivering ultimate durability but a beautifully stylish finish.

10. Mix it up – Your tiling should be exciting! Don't be confined by traditional patterns – mix it up with individual modular flooring and multi-sized mosaics, you'll be amazed by the outcome and the fun you have designing.

Ticking off the boxes for your 'forever' home

By Julia Gray

THE property market isn't showing much sign of cooling down as the weather grows chillier.

Indeed, according to official figures, the average house price across the UK has surged to £284,000 – a new record high.

The new all-time peak was reached after typical property values jumped by £2,000 in the space of a month, the report from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has shown.

So, if you're wondering how you're going to make another leap up the property ladder to get the house of your dreams, how about considering turning your existing property into your "forever" home?

Making sure that your property will grow with you and your family is a tough task, and of course you'll have to work out whether it might actually be cheaper in the long run to just up sticks and move.

But even if you do eventually decide to sell up, making your property look like an attractive place for someone else to call home for the long term, could boost your chances of getting a good price.

Deciding how to spend your budget to turn your property into a "forever home" isn't necessarily straightforward though.

However, should you just think about what would suit you and your family best - or could you make a cannier investment by trying to consider the wider appeal of your renovations?

Perfect

Craig Calder, director of Barclays Mortgage Services, says: "A forever home obviously has a different meaning for everyone, so owning one that's perfect for you might not be perfect someone else.

"But by having a checklist of the most common features ticked off, you can create a property you would want to grow old in, knowing others are likely to broadly agree if you ever decide to re-sell."

Here are some ideas from Barclays Mortgages to ensure your property becomes closer to the ideal "forever" home for both yourself and any potential future buyers, based on research among 2,000 people about what their dream property would look like:

Build a garage.

Whilst there have been reports that we rarely use our garages to store our cars, this was voted the top dream feature for forever homes in the UK. Garages often act as a valuable storage facility, so if you have the space, it could be worth investing in an extension. Too expensive? Consider whether some of your existing space can be converted into a parking area instead.

Convert the spare room.

If you have a spare or rarely-used room such as an office, it's worth considering converting it into a bedroom so it can be marketed as a guest room.

Get an en-suite.

Oh the luxury! If you don't have space in your property to install an en-suite upstairs, a downstairs toilet is also a good option.

Go green.

Make the most of any green space that comes with a property, ensuring buyers have a little oasis of their own.

Time to dine.

Shows like Come Dine With Me have revived the classic dinner party, so it's of little surprise that many people would hope for an impressive dining room.

This doesn't have to be a big space – it could just be a clearly marked out area in a kitchen – so potential buyers can imagine how they might use this space.

Plunge

Meanwhile, new research from Which? Mortgage Advisers, which has found younger people and first-time buyers spend less than an hour looking at a property on average before taking the plunge.

Buyers aged 45-plus, who are likely to have more housing market experience, tend to spend more than an hour checking round the property they intend to buy.

With house prices still rising fast in some areas, it's little wonder some buyers get swept up in all the excitement and forget more practical considerations.

Across England and Wales, the average



Making sure that your property will grow with you and your family is a tough task



Consider all the options carefully before making a big move



People have different ideas about the 'perfect' home

asking price has reached a record high of nearly £295,000, according to property website Rightmove.

With a shortage of properties in popular areas, it's easy to see why many buyers may be tempted to act on impulse.

But this can come at a cost. Buyers who don't spend time checking out a property thoroughly can fail to spot problems which

will cause financial headaches later down the line. This will cause even more woes for those who have no room left in their budget for extra expenses.

Martyn Baum, president of the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) says: "When you're buying a house, the process can move very quickly and become overwhelming. Buyers should take care to make

sure they are looking out for the right things when they're leaning towards making an offer, before making a final decision."

The Which? research found that as many as one in 10 buyers did not do any checks while viewing a property they later bought.

Of those who did make checks, looking for obvious mould or damp was the most common check carried out.



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SAMANTHA, 42yrs, seeks gent for festive season, doesn't want to be along again. Age/looks/unimportant, GSOH essential. Box: 4140774. Text only.

LYN, 43, divorced very lonely single mum, young looking, slim, attractive, WLTm similar male for companionship. Age/looks/Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418195

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

SUSANNAH, 48, curvy female, romantic, warm and cuddly, seeks similar kind male for a loving relationship with lots of cuddles and kisses. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417341

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SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all ages answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

YVONNE, single mum, happy with life, but would like to meet someone to share fun times with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420269

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39 yr old independent single Mum, knows the benefit of having a good man in the picture. Text only to Mailbox no: 5084796

SARAH, curvaceous brunette, 35, passionate nature, solvent, OHAC, WLTm date again, looking for male to take me out. Looks/Age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420207

FELICITY, 38yrs, attractive, petite but shapely lady seeks gent for indoor activities! Age/looks/marital status unimportant but must be discreet and non demanding. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 420235

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FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 416287

MAGGIE, 72 yrs, young, good sense of humour, well presented, WLTm kind, sincere chappie to share coffee and a chat. Text only to Mailbox no: 5310040

LOUISE 35, dark hair, blue eyes, attractive ex air hostess, looking for fun times with older male for romantic nights in and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420043

FRANCES, 45, busty female, loves nights in/out, seeking uncomplicated male who can occupy my free time for quality companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420003

MARY, pretty, friendly, lots of fun, lives in Kidderminster, loves the theatre, opera, ballet, WLTm a lovely, charming, funny, genuine guy, 30s, to settle down with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419883

LOU, 45, lives in Shrewsbury, WLTm a lady between 42-49 with blue eyes, must be kind, caring and funny to mend my broken heart, someone who likes to curl up on the sofa for cozy nights in. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419855

JANE, 47, voluptuous female, long hair, brown eyes, generous curves, would love to spend cosy nights in with that special male. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417895

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pils call. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420175

TARA 22 tall slim but curvy with legs that go all the way up to heaven, WLTm very appreciative confident male for adult fun. Contact me anytime. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417401

FEMALE, dark haired 5'10", curvy, likes reading, walking, cinema, seeks male 40-50 for lasting relationship. Text only to Mailbox no: 507745

PROFESSIONAL black female age 52, enjoys evenings and days out, would like to meet similar Midlands male. Text only to Mailbox no: 5315901

CATHY, 42, good looking brunette with a real passion for life, seeking male for happy times, dates, chats, romance and more. Pils call. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420073

DEBBIE, 29, looking for mature professional fun guy 40-50 to spend good times with. Call me, you have nothing to lose. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419075

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 416287

CHARLENE, 24, petite curvy young blonde seeks similar cheery, fun loving guy for lots of fun and love. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419597

JOANNA, 36, petite, auburn haired female, lovely figure seeks loving older male for fun nights out and cosy nights in. Maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419595

SHARON 32, attractive black single mum of one, very tactile and passionate, WLTm male 45-65yrs for fun meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419579

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed brunette, fit and active, seeks similar male to have a laugh with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419417

KAREN 50, widow, likes swimming, horse riding, keep fit, cage pigeon shooting, GSOH! N/S, no drinker, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 415211

CURRY, farm girl at heart, 32, 5ft 10, single mum, caring, kind, shy, likes walks, cooking WLTm tactile male farmer for LTR. Text only to Mailbox no: 5067001

FEMALE medium build, blonde hair, 5ft 5ins, seeks male, 50-58, GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 415429

WIDOW 50, blonde hair, GSOH, 5ft 5ins, slim, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 415767

MARIE, 43, fun blue-eyed brunette, fit and active, seeks similar male to have a laugh with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419417

FEMALE 50's, 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks gent with GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 415871

LADY Penelope seeks her very own PARKER (47-58) to go on a voyage of discovery and romance. Text only to Mailbox no: 4550237

BLACK lady seeks white male over 60, any location, friendship and love a lot more. Text only to Mailbox no: 4256384

68YR old widow, attractive, seeks sincere N/S male, likes reading, meals out and walks. West Midlands. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 414773

JULIA 47, looking for genuine, reasonably attractive male friend, may lead to more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419695

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

BLUE eyed female, blonde hair, slim, GSOH, loving, caring, understanding, seeking similar male, 55-55. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 416989

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418117

CAROL Ann, sensitive slim brunette very romantic seeks tall handsome male for fun, friendship and lots of TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419385

KIRSTEN, 36, attractive, blonde and very bored, seeking open-minded decent male for fun/friendship, 40-60yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419383

VAL 41, pretty, cuddly, flirty, seeks similar fun loving male for an uncomplicated no strings relationship. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 416501

MID naughty Tories female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 409109

DIVORCED female, attractive, sensual by nature, OHAC, bored with own company, looking to make life a little more exciting with like minded man. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419215

LINDA, 47, brown-eyed blonde, caring loving and honest, many interests, seeks genuine male to share lovely evenings with. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417211

JOYCE, affectionate sensitive widow, bit of a romantic, seeks loving male for lots of TLC. Looks unimportant, it's what's in the heart that matters. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419143

DEBBIE, 29, looking for mature professional fun guy 40-50 to spend good times with. Call me, you have nothing to lose. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419075

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FEMALE 50's, 5ft 5ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, seeks gent with GSOH, loving, caring and understanding. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 415871

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418845

LOOKING for the right chemistry with country loving gent who like me is looking for some extra fun in their life. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418843

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTm passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418695

ATTRACTIVE professional lady, widow, 50's, likes walks, sight seeing, theatre, meals out, seeks genuine, professional gent, 5ft 5ins plus to make life more enjoyable. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418615

JAN 35yr old blue eyed blonde, outgoing, friendly, WLTm passionate guy to share good wine, good conversation, flirting and fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418695

SENSUAL tactile, attractive female, long blonde hair, blue eyes, loves travel winning/dining, WLTm genuine male for mutual companionship. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418587

JULES, sensitive tactile, curvy brunette, hopeless romantic, seeks tall, loving male for fun, friendship and possible LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419033

VIRGINIA, outgoing social female, 24, tall slim and attractive, looking for fun times, maybe more. Can accommodate/travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418845

HEATHER, well travelled solvent brunette looking to share a large glass of wine and whatever follows with affectionate man friend. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419031

PAULINE, 49yrs, very attractive, curvy divorcee, affectionate and fun, seeks laid back, sincere male for an uncomplicated, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418925

LADY young at heart, nice eyes, seeks man 42-52 with good sense of humour. Text only to Mailbox No: 4881572

CARING male, 57, OHAC, looking for female, any race, status and age for no strings discreet fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 411461

STEVE 39, 5ft 9ins, medium build, likes walks, seeks female, slim-medium build, single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 396709

PHIL 55, divorced, 5ft 10ins, slim, OHAC, seeks female, 18 plus for discreet adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 401875

GENUINE male, 58, OHAC, looking for fun lady for no strings fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417601

PHIL 55, divorced, 5ft 10ins, slim, OHAC, seeks female, 18 plus for discreet adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417325

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419283

WAYNE, 40, cheeky, good career, likes gym. Looking for a lady who likes stimulating conversation and times. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 419829

DARREN, 44, slim build, dark brown hair, green eyes, seeks genuine female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418809

COLIN 48, seeks cuddly large big beautiful woman 45 to 55 for LTR, love, romance, hopefully likes cuddles, kisses, holding hands. Text only to Mailbox no: 5308886

52YRS old guy genuine down to earth looking for Mrs right for nights in and out, walking, cooking, lives like the full. Text only to Mailbox no: 5332115

MALE looking to meet a nice lady for fun times to spend with. I am 72 and would like to meet a lady between 60 and 70. Text only to Mailbox no: 4906469

PHILIP, 29 years old, 5ft 11ins, stocky build, green eyes, friendly, GSOH, seeks genuine friendly N/S female for friendship, possible relationship. Text only to Mailbox no: 5335424

PHIL, 58, slim, OHAC, from Wolverhampton, looking for a fun lady for a no-strings relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420265

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418369

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418369

YOUNG early 40's female, GSOH, kind, caring, considerate, seeks male for friendship, possible romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 410847

CAROL 49, attractive, green eyed blonde, honest warm hearted, n/s with GSOH likes cinema, music, walking, meals out and travel seeking similar male. Text only to Mailbox No: 4283683

FEMALE, 50, short blond hair, blue eyes, 5ft 10, slim build, looking for a man 50-55 with salt and pepper hair and GSOH. Text only to Mailbox No: 4435776

HEATHER, 34, single very attractive brunette, sensual and interesting, looking to add to life's experiences and adventures with professional male. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418193

WENDY, 40, slim, fit, bubbly female looking to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418369

EILEEN, slim green eyed brunette likes meals out and cosy nights in, seeks tall male who would make her laugh and brighten up her day. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 418347

FEMALE fun brunette, attractive, 26, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 416287

FEMALE seeking gent 55-70, down to earth, nice and intelligent who knows how to treat a lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417195

ATTRACTIVE, fit, sporty, tactile, youthful black male seek relationship with lady. N/S. Text only to Mailbox no: 4851641

COLIN, five foot eight, blue eyes, bundle of fun to be around, likes growing tuchias for showing, vintage tractor for showing, weekends away, going out and staying in WLTm a lady for friendship/LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420089

STEVE 39, 5ft 9ins, medium build, likes walks, seeks female, slim-medium build, single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 396709

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PHIL, 58, slim, OHAC, from Wolverhampton, looking for a fun lady for a no-strings relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420265

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Wolverhampton. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 405551

MALE, 70, retired from NHS, seeking a lady for friendship and companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 420147

WIDOWER 70 plus, seeking female for friendship. Love me me my dog. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 417439

VERY useful, attractive 58 yr old, GSOH, six foot tall, nice build, n/s, genuine, tactile, fit and sporty, looking for a woman for nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 500 3724 Box No: 42013

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27.12.15... 10.00am....4pm

28.12.15... 10.00am....4pm

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Welshpool are pegged back by high-fliers

WELSHPOOL came close to upsetting Spar Mid Wales League division one title favourites Penrhynoch only to be denied by a late fightback in their 2-2 draw at Cae Baker.

After a goalless first half, a depleted Pool struck twice through Will Thomas to take a 2-0 lead, before being pegged back in the last 15 minutes.

First, Jonathan Evans headed home a Dylan James cross, before Arron Lemon fired in a rebound to preserve Penrhyn's unbeaten record in the league.

Llanidloes Town's new boss Hugh Clarke notched his first win since taking charge when his side overcame Tywyn Bryn-crug 2-1 at Victoria Avenue.

Despite having the manager's son Harri Clarke sent off for retaliation on the half hour, and trailing to a Paul Grant penalty, the Daffs rallied with strikes from Barry Haralambous and Sam Williams.

Elsewhere, the weather again hit the fixture list with Waterloo Rovers' home clash with Bow Street postponed due to a waterlogged surface, while lowly Montgomery's trip to Llandrinod Wells suffered a similar fate.

Also off were Llanrhaeadr's home tussle with Knighton Town, but the villagers remain top by one point following Penrhynoch's draw with Welshpool.

Elsewhere, Carno's trip to Hay St Mary's was off without a ball kicked, while Machynlleth's home fixture with Aberaeron did get underway before being abandoned.



Montgomery all-rounder Keith bowled over with player award

MONTGOMERY all-rounder Keith Griffiths landed a Shropshire County Cricket League end of season award after his exploits with bat and ball helped the club's second team land the reserve division three title.

The experienced campaigner made 310 runs at an average of 31, which included two half centuries with a best of 93 not out.

He also picked up 36 wickets at an average of 10.31, which included a remarkable haul of 6-2.

The awards were handed out by new-

ly-appointed Shropshire Cricket Board general manager Richard Cox who presented trophies to winners and runners-up of each of the league's ten divisions, and also to individual players of the year.

A special Lifetime Achievement award was given to John Faulkner of north Shropshire club Iseoyd and Fenns Bank, who has just completed his 57th consecutive season for the club.

■ Pictured: Montgomery's Keith Griffiths with Shropshire Cricket Board general manager Richard Cox

Saints frustrated as Bala grab a point

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

**The New Saints 1 Bala Town 1
DESPITE taking an early lead, The New Saints were forced to settle for their seventh Dafabet Welsh Premier draw of the season – and fourth at Park Hall.**

The high flying Saints made the perfect start with Aeron Edwards putting them ahead in the 13th minute when chipping keeper Ashley Morris from 25 yards.

But, for the second week running, the league leaders failed to build on their early strike as Rob Pearson earned parity for Bala six minutes into the second half.

Although TNS are still unbeaten and well clear at the top, it was a frustrating outcome, particularly after getting their noses in front.

They enjoyed plenty of possession, but failed to capitalise as Bala – who have not won in 18 outings with the Saints – clawed their way back with a stirring second half display.

Boss Craig Harrison admitted it was another frustrating night that saw his TNS side fail to build on their early enterprise.

"It's been happening a bit too often, a bit of a trend is forming which we need to address," he said.

"We play excellently in the first half and deservedly take the lead, but then our opponents come back in the second half, either by playing well themselves or us not showing the same energy and drive as we did in the first half"

As so often this season, the Saints were soon on the front foot as they attacked down both flanks, and forced Bala into some early defending with Greg Draper seeing a strike saved by keeper Ashley Morris.

They continued to dominate the early stages and, as they have done in several games this season, notched an early goal when Edwards' cross beat Morris from wide out before landing in the top corner.

Jamie Mullan looked lively on the flank, a strong run almost prising another opening, while the winger was denied by keeper Morris in another raid.

Although TNS had the bulk of possession, Bala had a couple of half chances themselves as they looked lively on the break, with Hunt heading inches over from John Irving's cross.

Ian Sheridan was denied by a smart save from Paul Harrison when through on goal, while ex-TNS midfielder Connal Murtagh also went close with a header.

After the break, Matty Williams was off target from close range for the hosts before Bala levelled six minutes into the second half when Pearson slotted home his first goal for the club after good work from Kieran Smith on the left.

TNS continued to push forward but it proved another frustrating night at Park Hall as Harrison's high-fliers had to settle for a point.

Olympians at Telford 10k race



Ready for the elite run are Oswestry Olympians (left) Ian Lowe and Simon Barkley flanking Tony Paul from Telford AC. Picture: Peter Flemmich.

ATHLETES from Welshpool and Oswestry Olympians were among a record number of 926, from far and wide, that finished this year's ever popular 32nd Telford 10k.

Organised by Telford AC, in the Telford Town Park, Ryan McLeod, the pre race favourite and UK Half Marathon Champion, proved the one to beat in finishing in 28.40 to take first place despite being put under pressure in the latter stages of the race.

McLeod, son of Mike McLeod the 1984 Olympic 10,000m silver medallist, is from the North East, but now runs for the strong Midland club, Tipton Harriers.

Last years winner John Beattie, from Newham and Gateshead's Chris Parr crossed the line together in 29.45, with 4th place going to Brighton's Finn McNally in 29.45.

Local interest saw Welshpool's Andrew Davies, running for Stockport, take fifth in a new personal best time of 29.49 as seven athletes managed to finish under the magical 30 minute barrier.

The first Shropshire finisher was Telford AC's Paul Ward who was 52nd in 32.28 and the first over 45, with Oswestry Olympian runner Oliver Blake 55th in 32.32.

Elinor Kirk from Swansea won the women's race in a new personal best time of 33.07, the third fastest winning time that puts her sixth on the UK rankings for 2015.

Telford's Claire Martin, the three times winner of the race, was the first Shropshire finisher as 16th overall and the first over 40 in 36.17.

There were two Oswestry Olympian finishers in the top 200 of the mens race - Ian Lowe who clocked 35.46 to come in 130th and fellow Olympian Simon Barkley who finished in 179th in 37.09.

In the ladies, Oswestry's May Davis came in 35th in 41.31, while in 45th position was another Oswestry runner, Jenny Davis, and third Over 45 in 43.06.

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Llanfair on road in cup fourth round

LLANFAIR United suffered more weather woe as their home clash with Prestatyn Town in the Huws Gray Cymru Alliance was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

Having not played for three weeks, the league newcomers were desperate to get back to action.

They hope that their Mount Field ground will be fit to host their Powys derby with Gwilsfield on Monday (December 28)

Holders Llanfair United will be on the road for the fourth round of the Central Wales Cup – if they can overcome Bow Street.

The Cymru Alliance new boys face a trip to New Quay or Abermule, but first must take on Ceredigion side Bow Street in the third round.

Draw: Aberystwyth University or Montgomery v Penryn or Hay St Marys, Cardigan Town or Forden United v Kerry or Llanilar, Dyffryn Banw or Berriew v Llanidloes Town or Bont, Knighton Town or Gwilsfield v Llandrinod Wells or Penrhynoch, Machynlleth or Tywyn Bryn-crug v Cae'r-saws or Llanrhaeadr, New Quay or Abermule v Llanfair United or Bow Street, Radnor Valley or Aberaeron v Phayader Town or South Wells, Waterloo Rovers or Llansantffraid Village v Carno or Terlio United.

Ties Saturday, February 6, 2016.

Hockey club on lookout for players

OSWESTRY hockey club are in need of more male players after struggling to raise teams for a number of games this season.

The problems were highlighted last weekend when the mens team had to concede their home clash against West Bromwich due to lack of personnel.

Frustratingly, the club are more than a match for anyone in the West Midlands Hockey League division one when they have a full complement of players, and currently lie fifth in the table.

They have recorded five league wins, had four defeats and one draw, and now take a break before returning to duty on Saturday, January 9 at home to Droitwich Spa.

Anyone interested in playing can contact the club.

Walking footballers set the pace at TNS

MORE than 100 players braved the weather to ensure TNS Community Foundation's Walking Football Festival was a day to remember.

A total of 13 teams, from as far afield as Blackpool, Fleetwood and Rochdale took part and, following a fierce competition, Birmingham outfit Beechcroft were crowned champions after beating Leicester Silver Foxes on penalties when their final clash ended in a goalless draw.

Yet for organiser Shelly McGlinchey, it has always been less about the winners and more about encouraging fitness among the elderly.

"It is the third time in a couple of years that we've put the competition on," explained McGlinchey, health and active lifestyle co-ordinator for the TNS Community Foundation.

"We began with five teams, then had seven but this time there were 13 sides involved.

"With 10 players in each squad, that is around 130 men - plus the one lady we had compete.

"It was really nice to see so many involved from different areas."

Walking football was first developed in 2011 for men and women aged 50-and-over and has seen its popularity quickly surge. There are now more than 400 teams playing regularly across the country, with the number increasing on an almost weekly basis.

Played both indoors and outdoors the key difference to the normal game, as the name suggests, is that the sport is played at a walking pace and a free-kick is conceded any time a competitor breaks into a run.

At the TNS, not even the elements could harm the day's entertainment with even torrential rain unable to derail the action.

"It was an atrocious day weather-wise," continued McGlinchey. The wind and rain just didn't stop.

"But you should have seen their spirit. They were totally drenched from head to foot.

"Your will to win grows with age. It is a fantastic thing."

The idea for the festival was born from the popularity of weekly sessions, organised by McGlinchey at the club.

Tournament rules state each squad may contain two players aged between 35 and 50, though only one can play at a time.

Any players under 50 must be those of a physical disability, or recovering from an illness or operation. The matches were 10 minutes in length.

There were three pools that led to a semi-final and final, while a Consolation Cup was held for those who didn't qualify for the semis.

Rochdale Strollers claimed that trophy after seeing off Shrewsbury WFC 2-0.

Rally forum driving into Welshpool

THERE'S an exciting start to the year for local rallying fans when some of the sport's top names head for Welshpool.

The Mid Wales Rally Forum will take place at Theatre Clara on Saturday, January 2 and leading the way will be former champion Gwyn-daf Evans, who will link up with the evening's host Howard Davies, his co-driver during his 1996 British Championship winning season.

Guy Wilks, winner in 2007 and 2008 will attend with his co-driver Phil Pugh while other big names attending from the past include Dai Llewellyn (1989 & 1990 champion), Mike Broad (winning co-driver 1985), Will Sparrow (1970 winner) and Bill Gwynne who has won British titles on two and four wheels.

Another guest will be top driver Tom Cave, who hopes to put his name on the 2016 trophy.

Tickets cost £12.50 from Rally Marketing in Welshpool (01938-553764), with all proceeds going to cancer charities.

New Saints v Barry to be televised

S4C will screen the Welsh Cup fourth round tie between holders The New Saints and Barry Town at Jenner Park.

The tie, to be played on February 6 with a 5.15 kick-off, is a repeat of the 1996 final, where Barry's full-time professionals were shocked in a penalty shoot-out by the Saints, who were then known as Llansantffraid.

Much has changed at both clubs since that afternoon at the Cardiff Arms Park as it is the Saints who are now a full time club, perennially in Europe while winning the Welsh Premier nine times.

Barry, on the other hand, nearly disappeared as a club less than three years ago but, following the re-emergence of the club led by the supporters, committee and current manager Gavin Chesterfield, the

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

Linnetts have gained successive promotions and are enjoying a good season in the Welsh Football League division One.

They have also applied for the domestic licence to be promoted back into the Dafabet Welsh Premier.

Chesterfield is delighted that his side will have the opportunity to play in front of the live cameras.

"Naturally we are proud to be hosting the live game as the draw unearths great memories of games between the clubs from yesteryear, and for me this is a game befitting of the competition," he said.

"We accept that we go into this game as huge un-

derdogs, given The New Saints' full-time status and continued success, but we are here to embrace the challenge.

"TNS are a very good team, but in the cup anything can happen. We will as always prepare well and our players and back room team will relish this opportunity."

Barry Town have won the famous competition six times, most recently in 2003, while TNS have won the trophy on five occasions, including the last two seasons.

S4C Sports Editor Sue Butler added: "This is certainly the stand-out tie of the fourth round draw of the JD Welsh Cup and the match promises to be an intriguing encounter between two of Welsh domestic football's most successful teams."



Receiving their awards from Oswestry Olympians' chairman Alec White are (from left): Ellen Harrison (president's award), Garry Owens (10k and 5k), Jackie Jarvis (first marathon handicap) and Tania Brandon (third Rose Bowl)



Richie Collins (right) receives the multi-sports award from head of tri-section Tim Tansley

Olympians toast a successful season

ATHLETES and officials were honoured as Oswestry Olympians celebrated a successful campaign at its end of year presentation night.

The club enjoyed a terrific competitive season, but the night was not just about recognising the runners who have achieved so much, but also a chance to say thank you to all those who have helped organise and support the Olympians in various capacities over the course of the year.

Chairman Alec White handed out the awards on the night, with some of the notable performers being Paul Jones and Alison Lavender who scooped the honours in many categories.

Ian Lowe and Yvonne Hill were winners of the first ever Fell Running Series, while Ray Pickett received the Coaches Award, recog-

ATHLETICS by John Bridgwater

nised for his achievements over the past 12 months.

Ellen Harrison and Dave Newton were also recognised for their extraordinary contributions to Oswestry Olympians by picking up the President's awards.

The presentation night saw Jones and Lavender land the club's Rose Bowl with the season's best times over half marathon, 10k and 5k. Their times are added together and the fastest total wins.

Jones took the men's accolade in 2.01.07, with Ian Lowe runner-up with 2.16.14 and Garry Owens third in 2.16.48.

Lavender led the way in the women's in 2.10.50, from Jackie Jarvis (2.56.50) and Tania Brandon (2.59.47).

The same duo were also the star performers in winning the fastest 5k handicap, with the best season time against the five star chart for 5k. Steve Roberts and Owens were second and third respectively in the men's, and Susie Hancock and Barbara Ward second and third in the women's section.

Jones and Lavender again produced a winning double act in the 10k handicap, with Owens this time second in the men's and Roberts third, while Jenny Davis and Hancock were second and third ladies.

It was a repeat performance for the winners in the half marathon handicap, Owens and Roberts in hot pursuit in the men's and Charlotte Jones and Jenny Davis filling the next two positions for the ladies.

Jones made it high fives with victory in the marathon handicap, Owens and Alec A White second and third in the men.

But this time Jackie Jarvis was first lady, with Ellen Ashton second and Jacqui Gears in third spot.

In the cross country awards, for best four out of five club positions in the North Wales League, Tim Tensley claimed the men's honours, from Ian Lowe (second) and Steve Roberts (third). Lavender was the top lady, from Jones (second) and Ali Tickner (third).

The multisport performance of the year went to Richie Collins, with Sarah Greaves second and Steve Roberts third.

Ian Lowe was first recipient of the men's Fell running championship honour while Yvonne Hill was ladies' winner.



Getting their awards from chairman Alec White are (from left): Jacqui Gears (third marathon handicap), Richard Foggin (third fell running), Steve Roberts (second fell running) and Susie Hancock (second 5k handicap)



Eagles face early test at the leaders

OSWESTRY'S rugby players face a big start to the New Year when they visit leaders and title rivals Dukinfield in a top of the table tussle in the Cheshire South League.

After a couple of washouts, the Eagles got back on the pitch with a 22-3 rain-drenched home win against Congleton to stay just five points adrift of the pacesetters in third spot, and with two games in hand on the leaders.

They now take a break before returning to duty with a key clash away to one of their chief rivals Dukinfield on Saturday, January 9.

It was a similar scenario to last season when the Eagles faced some of the league's big guns in the New Year, only to see their challenge fade with some costly defeats.

They will be anxious to avoid that happening again, particularly after ending the first half of the season on such a high with 10 wins and just one defeat following their 22-3 victory over Congleton at Granville Park.

The Eagles were soon on the front foot, with flanker Zac Baldwin winning the race from a kick ahead to dive on the ball for the first try, with Fin Grogan adding the conversion.

This setback galvanised Congleton into action and the visitors showed excellent attacking skills to pin the Eagles in their own half, but their endeavours were met by some stirring defence time and time again.

A fantastic clearance from Grogan saw the Eagles back in the Congleton half, and the fly half made the most of a penalty conceded to slot over from an angle for a 10-0 lead. Again the Cheshire visitors turned up the pressure in the heavy conditions, but were still unable to get on the scoreboard.

It was tough going on the drenched surface, but the Eagles pushed forward with some fine play before driving over from a superb maul with big second row Mike Davis emerging with the score for an unconverted try.

The rain continued to pound the increasingly muddy pitch in the second half, with Congleton finally reducing the arrears with a penalty.

But Oswestry were in no mood to relinquish their grip and, with some fresh legs coming on to bring renewed impetus, they wrapped up the points with Jamie Luckett storming down the left wing to score triumphantly in the corner, with Grogan landing the tricky conversion.

OSWESTRY II eased their basement worries in the North West League division four (south) with a welcome 38-7 win away to Congleton II.

Local bowls club looks for players

THE bowls season may seem a long way off, but Oswestry club Ye Olde Crofte is on the hunt for new players.

Vice chairman Tom Davies says the Welsh Walls club is looking for both experienced players or beginners, to play either socially or for one of the three league teams.

Anyone interested can contact Tom on 01691 659904, or visit the club's new website yecrofte.co.uk

TNS boss: Every game is a cup final

FOOTBALL by John Bridgwater

It was the seventh time this season that the defending champions have been forced to share the spoils, and fourth at home.

Despite still lying nine points clear at the top, Harrison knows his side need to maintain their high standards if they are to repeat last season's famous treble winning triumph.

"The last few weeks have been frustrating as we want to win every game, we've had a winning mentality for the last three or four years," he said.

"We're still in a great position, but what we've

got to make sure is that complacency does not creep in whether we are 10 points or 20 points clear at the top of the table.

"To have the kind of record we have, we won the treble last season and are still unbeaten this season, shows the desire and drive we have at the club, and we've got to keep playing every game as if our life depends on it."

"This game is done now and we have to move on. We will review it on DVD, see where we went wrong and look to eradicate our mistakes for our next game."

That next game is against Newtown, who have proved more than a match for any side in the league in the past few seasons.

GUILS RELISH BIG CUP TEST

GUILDSFIELD will be savouring the chance of another epic Welsh Cup showdown with Airbus UK Broughton after clinching their place in the last 16 of the prestigious competition.

The villagers overcame Cwmaman United 3-0 in their third round tie last Saturday after two previous postponements due to the weather. Now standing in their way are the Wingmakers, with the Guils setting their sights on another cup shock after famously defeating the Welsh Premier high fliers 3-2 in the second round at Clos Myton back in October 2007.

Just two players from that day survive, captain Gareth Jones – who scored one of the goals in the thrilling extra-time win – and goalkeeper Dave Littleford. That year, the Guils went on to reach the quarter-finals, before finally losing to eventual cup winners Bangor City, the third Welsh Premier side they had met in the competition.

Boss Dan Barton is relishing the home tie on Saturday, February 6, and believes his Cymru Alliance side have what it takes to repeat their triumph of eight years ago.

"We are the clear underdogs with the budget and squad that Airbus have, but we're at home and we'll see what happens," he said.

"I want to have a good run in the cup. Hopefully we can get a good crowd to get behind us."

"We can now look ahead after getting past Cwmaman on Saturday. It was a close first half, but a bit of quality came through with Jake Cook's goal just before half time which knocked the stuffing out of them."

After two postponements in Carmarthenshire saw the third round tie switched to their Clos Myton ground, Guilsfield made the most of home advantage with 3-0 passage against their Welsh League division two rivals.

After an even first half, the Guils tightened their grip after the break as Adam Jenkins weighed in with a brace on 79 and 85 minutes to finally put paid to their stubborn visitors.

Buoyed by the cup win, Guilsfield turn their thoughts to the Cymru Alliance when they visit Powys rivals Llanfair United next Monday (2pm).

Four goals from Ben Jones helped Llanfair Youth progress to the Mid Wales Youth League Cup with a 9-1 romp against Newtown.

New captain Green in the pink



Margaret Green drives into office watched by her fellow members at Oswestry Golf Club. Margaret has been a member of the club for over 13 years and served on numerous committees. She has an handicap of 22, her chosen charity for the year is the RNLI and played her opening round with vice captain Jo Davies (left) and retiring captain Janet Williams.

OSWESTRY'S new Lady Captain Margaret Green drove into office helped by the vice captain Jo Davies, and the immediate past captain Janet Williams.

The occasion was marked by a competition that saw Rachel Wigley take the front nine honours with 18 points on a card play off

from second placed Judith Thornell, who also finished with 18 points. In third was Dorothy Mottram with 17 points.

The back nine winner was Alma Barker with 14 points on a card play off from Setsuko Watanabe, also 14 points, with Gwyneth Baines Jones in third with 13 points.

COBRA dig in for vital win to ease drop fears

COBRA go into the New Year with fortunes looking up after boosting their survival prospects in rugby's Swalec Welsh League division one (north) with a vital 13-10 win away to fellow strugglers Dolgellau.

Victory, their third of the season, lifted the Meifod men out of the relegation places, and will put them in good heart for their next action at home to fourth placed Llandudno on Saturday, January 2.

They had to dig deep to see off a relentless second half onslaught in deteriorating conditions to claim a memorable Mid-Wales derby win by the skin of their teeth.

"Hopefully it can be a turning point for the season, there's good spirit in the team," said a club spokesman.

"We're still missing that cutting edge, but our pack has been dominant and perhaps these wet conditions are working in our favour."

The game was a personal triumph for fly half Llew Williams who scored all the points for the visitors, with their only try, while adding a conversion and two penalties.

Penalties

In rain drenched conditions, it was COBRA who had the benefit of a squalling, gusting wind during the first period, and took the lead when Williams out-paced the cover defence to touch down following a kick through before adding the conversion.

He then kicked two penalties for a 13-0 lead, his first from 40 yards, but Dolgellau revived their hopes with a well worked close range try from hooker Geraint Evans just before half time.

After the break, the Meifod side were under the cosh, but held firm before centre Tom Hughes set up a tense finish when he broke free to slide over for Dol's second try with eight minutes left.

But COBRA managed to hold on in the dying moments to repel the hosts and claim four precious league points to lift themselves up to third bottom.

Saints take lead – then concede five

FIFTH placed St Martins crashed 5-1 at home to Shifnal Town to dent their prospects in the West Midlands League division one.

The Saints started well enough and took a 35th minute lead when Jamie Hands fired home following a Shawn Melusi free-kick.

But Shifnal hit back with Toby Lumbard levelling four minutes before half time, and Nathan Jackson gave the visitors the advantage with a deflected effort four minutes after the break.

Lombard then made it 3-1, before the lead was extended with an own goal from a corner.

Nathan Jackson completed the nap hand from the penalty spot after being brought down in the box by keeper Jake Northwood.

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